



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Department of
**Agriculture,
Food and the Marine**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**

Ireland - Rural Development Programme (National)

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1. TITLE OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Ireland - Rural Development Programme (National)

2. MEMBER STATE OR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

2.1. Geographical area covered by the programme

Geographical Area:

IE - National

Description:

The Programme covers the total territory of Ireland.

2.2. Classification of the region

Description:

All regions of Ireland are classified as 'more developed regions' in accordance with Commission Implementing Decision No. 99/2014.

3. EX-ANTE EVALUATION

3.1. Description of the process, including timing of main events, intermediate reports, in relation to the key stages of RDP development.

In line with the Rural Development Regulation, work on the ex ante evaluation of this Rural Development Programme (RDP) has been characterised by ongoing communication and engagement from an early stage between the evaluators and the Managing Authority, as part of an iterative process overall.

Following on from the finalisation by the Evaluation Helpdesk of the draft “Guidelines on the Ex Ante Evaluation of 2014-2020 RDPs” in August 2012, the Managing Authority began its initial preparation of a Request for Tender. At the time, discussions in relation to the detail of the Rural Development Regulation were still ongoing at EU level.

Following on from an open public procurement process held towards the end of 2012, Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants were recruited to complete the ex ante evaluation, including the Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment. A contract with the evaluators was signed on January 31, 2013.

During 2013, the focus of the evaluators' work was on the SWOT and situation analyses and the Needs Assessment as developed by the Managing Authority. This work involved extensive public and stakeholder consultation. This process specifically manifested itself in a number of changes to the structure and content of the SWOT. For example, the text in a number of areas was strengthened by the inclusion of quantitative evidence and data, some presentational changes were incorporated to ensure greater clarity, and certain themes (such as the importance of developing the knowledge base in the sector) were emphasised more clearly.

As the design of the RDP developed, the evaluators' focus was more on the detailed measure level information and budgets, and evaluating their fit with the overall strategy being proposed by the Managing Authority, as well as the suitability of the draft RDP indicator and financial plans. Therefore, the input of the evaluators has been taken into account from the development of the intervention logic through to measure design.

A series of meetings had been held between the evaluators and the Managing Authority in relation to the Ex Ante Evaluation. In addition, the evaluators have held bilateral meetings with the implementing divisions in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) on the actual RDP schemes. This ongoing engagement has ensured that the evaluators have gained a detailed understanding of the proposed RDP schemes. Outside of formal meetings, there has also been frequent contact between the evaluators and the Managing Authority as various issues arose.

The evaluators have also been involved in various stages of the public consultation process, including attending stakeholder workshops in July, 2013 and January, 2014. The Managing Authority provided copies of all written submissions to the evaluators also as part of their work. Both the Managing Authority and Fitzpatrick's attended an Evaluation Helpdesk Good Practice workshop on the ex ante evaluation of the SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment in Prague in May 2013. This helped to ensure a common understanding on these central elements of RDP design.

There was at all times an open and constructive working relationship between the two parties, which,

especially at crucial stages of the process, has helped to expedite the work. The evaluators were successfully able to maintain a balance between a critical and collaborative approach to the task at hand during the process.

Further details in relation to Ex Ante Evaluation and their main recommendations and how they have been incorporated into the RDP are set out in section 3.2.

The full ex ante evaluation report itself is set out in section 3.3 (attached separately).

3.2. Structured table containing the recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation and how they have been addressed.

Title (or reference) of the recommendation	Category of recommendation	Date
AHW Advisory 1	Other	
AHW Advisory 2	Other	
AHW Advisory 3	Other	
Areas of Natural Constraints	Programme implementing arrangements	
Bioenergy	Other	
Bioenergy 2	Other	
CPD 1	Programme implementing arrangements	
CPD 2	Programme implementing arrangements	
Capacity and Training Needs	Programme implementing arrangements	
Evaluation Plan	Other	
Financial Flexibility	Establishment of targets, distribution of financial allocations	
GLAS 1	Programme implementing arrangements	
GLAS 2	Programme implementing arrangements	
Indicator Plan	Other	
Knowledge Transfer Groups 1	Other	
Knowledge Transfer Groups 2	Programme implementing arrangements	
LEADER 1	Programme implementing arrangements	
LEADER 2	Other	
LEADER 3	Programme implementing arrangements	
LEADER 4	Programme implementing arrangements	
LEADER 5	Other	
LEADER 6	Programme implementing arrangements	

Land Mobility	Other	
Locally Led Agri Environment Schemes	Programme implementing arrangements	
Organic Farming	Establishment of targets, distribution of financial allocations	
SWOT 1	The SWOT analysis, needs assessment	
SWOT 2	The SWOT analysis, needs assessment	
Structural Issues	Other	
TAMS	Programme implementing arrangements	
Technical Assistance	Other	

3.2.1. AHW Advisory 1

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: AHW Advisory 1

Description of the recommendation

Targeted AHW Advisory Service - improve measure text in relation to some features, e.g. references to “training of trainers”, and vagueness in relation to monitoring and evaluation

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

The measure text in relation to the AHW Advisory element of Measure 2 has been redrafted in order to more clearly set out the separate submeasures involved, the relevant beneficiaries, and the relevant subsections of the measure description relevant to each sub measure

3.2.2. AHW Advisory 2

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: AHW Advisory 2

Description of the recommendation

Targeted AHW Advisory Service - sharpen the boundaries between this and other knowledge transfer

measures, particularly regarding training of veterinarians

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

The need to ensure boundaries between all measures has been a feature of RDP design and implementation. This has encompassed also the need to ensure complementarity between various measures focused on knowledge transfer. This has been accommodated by the RDP Coordinating Committee. For example, animal health topics covered in the Knowledge Transfer Groups will cover the general principle of the control of the diseases to be covered in the AHW advisory service and signpost farmers towards the advisory support available.

Clarifying text has also been included in the relevant measure descriptions.

3.2.3. AHW Advisory 3

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: AHW Advisory 3

Description of the recommendation

Targeted AHW Advisory Service - consider removing the reference to “welfare” from the measure title and description

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This recommendation has not been incorporated into the RDP given the intrinsic links between health and welfare issues.

3.2.4. Areas of Natural Constraints

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: Areas of Natural Constraints

Description of the recommendation

ANCs - ensure that minimum stocking requirements apply to the whole farm in order to realise the full environmental benefits of the Scheme

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design – i.e. the calculations for stocking density are on the basis of the whole farm. There are, however, a number of cases where exceptions to this practice are in place - for example the stocking density calculation may differ where recognised environmental plans are in situ.

3.2.5. Bioenergy

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Bioenergy

Description of the recommendation

Bioenergy - additional detail should be provided in relation to the additional premium payment proposed in the measure design process

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

As the design of the RDP progressed from the submission of the initial draft, it was decided to make a number of changes to the delivery of the bioenergy scheme and to pilot these on the basis of national funding in 2015. These changes are aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy response. Accordingly, this recommendation is no longer relevant to the RDP

3.2.6. Bioenergy 2

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Bioenergy

Description of the recommendation

Bioenergy - further details should be provided on the basis for target setting and uptake levels anticipated given the underdeveloped market for indigenously-produced biomass

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

As the design of the RDP progressed from the submission of the initial draft, it was decided to make a number of changes to the delivery of the bioenergy scheme and to pilot these on the basis of national funding in 2015. These changes are aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy response. Accordingly, this recommendation is no longer relevant to the RDP

3.2.7. CPD 1

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: CPD 1

Description of the recommendation

CPD - ensure that a sufficiently broad range of disciplines to meet the needs of the knowledge transfer measures is reflected in the Continued Professional Development training under the measure, in particular softer skills, e.g. farm succession, facilitation, innovation and entrepreneurship

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account re Art . 15 on KT.

This has been incorporated into measure design. A consultation process will underlie the identification of specific needs. This will ensure that the broad range of disciplines to meet the needs of knowledge transfer measures is reflected in the CPD for advisors in Measure 2. This complementarity is a feature of the RDP design, and is facilitated by the RDP Coordination Committee.

3.2.8. CPD 2

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: CPD 2

Description of the recommendation

CPD - undertake a an RDP wide assessment of the capacity and needs, including training needs, of the agricultural and rural development advisory services

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design, in particular by making it compulsory for advisors facilitating Knowledge Transfer Groups to undertake continuous professional development provided by DAFM. A consultation process will underlie the identification of specific needs. As part of measure design and implementation, consultation with key stakeholders will be put in place and will specifically address this issue.

3.2.9. Capacity and Training Needs

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: Capacity and Training Needs

Description of the recommendation

A review of the capacity and training needs of the agri-food and rural development advisory services to cope with the multiple, parallel demands of the RDP as a whole should be undertaken to identify any constraints that might hamper RDP implementation and actions that might need to be undertaken

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This matter will be addressed taking into account requirements on Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. Consultation with key stakeholders will specifically address this issue. For example, in developing RDP measures, consultation with advisory service providers clearly set out the measures that would involve their input and ensured that there was clarity in relation to likely demand for advisors vis a vis their available resources. In addition, training of advisors is underway which ensures that advisors have the relevant knowledge base to deal with various measures, while the uptake on training is an indicator of sufficient capacity to effectively implement the RDP.

3.2.10. Evaluation Plan

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Evaluation Plan

Description of the recommendation

Develop a detailed and specific evaluation plan at an early stage, setting out plans for the evaluation of individual measures, of individual themes, of progress under specific priorities, or other dimensions of the Programme and its implementation. The plan should incorporate result and impact indicators and targets where possible, albeit outside the scope of the formal programme indicator plan and the performance

framework

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

Monitoring and evaluation is a central element in the RDP. The Evaluation Plan sets out that a Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group will be set up to oversee all elements of overall CAP monitoring and evaluation. . This Steering Group has now been established, and is actively ensuring that monitoring and evaluation requirements are being addressed in the context of the design of the individual measures under the RDP. In addition, other specific actions have been included in the Evaluation Plan and will continue to be addressed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group. For example, additional indicators outside of the Indicator Plan have been developed for measures, and provision has been made for linking ongoing evaluation work in the Department to the RDP. The Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group will ensure that a clear programme of monitoring and evaluation is in place. The Monitoring Committee will be kept up to date in relation to this process

3.2.11. Financial Flexibility

Category of recommendation: Establishment of targets, distribution of financial allocations

Date:

Topic: Financial Flexibility

Description of the recommendation

Maintain financial flexibility and re-allocate where appropriate later (e.g. at Mid-term stage) based on close monitoring of the effectiveness of measures

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

The financial plan for the RDP will be monitored and managed in line with established procedures and in conjunction with relevant national budgetary processes.

3.2.12. GLAS 1

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: GLAS 1

Description of the recommendation

GLAS / + - to the extent possible distinguish and favour young farmers in competitive processes where GLAS / GLAS+ is oversubscribed

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

In setting selection criteria for GLAS, we have been advised that incorporating the favouring of young farmers is not possible as selection criteria must be related to the objectives of the Measure. Therefore, this recommendation has not been taken up in the RDP.

3.2.13. GLAS 2

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: GLAS 2

Description of the recommendation

Monitor closely how GLAS / GLAS+ uptake and participation is likely to support the activities required to support Ireland's compliance with obligations under the Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Nitrates Directives, and ensure there is flexibility to adjust the implementation approach where required

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will form part of the implementation of Measure 10 – GLAS. It is also intended to monitor take up of the scheme on an ongoing basis to ensure that ranking and selection for each tranche is adjusted where necessary to achieve the best overall balance of environmental objectives. In addition, while the introduction of local, targeted agri-environment schemes emerged from the preparatory analysis underlying the RDP as a priority for investment, it has been decided to include these actions in the RDP at an early date as an amendment. This will ensure that these locally focused interventions are more fully integrated with the national Measure 10 – GLAS and that the obligations under the above mentioned directives are most effectively met.

3.2.14. Indicator Plan

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Indicator Plan

Description of the recommendation

Include in the indicator plan some indicators and targets for schemes that don't yet have any

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been addressed in the drafting of the RDP. A monitoring and evaluation steering group is in place within DAFM to ensure that all data and monitoring and evaluation requirements are addressed across the CAP.

3.2.15. Knowledge Transfer Groups 1

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Knowledge Transfer Groups 1

Description of the recommendation

Knowledge Transfer Groups- discuss the requirement for only individual facilitators with the Commission, which it seems is very administratively intensive

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. The approach is based on the importance of having an open and transparent process that will deliver the most suitably qualified individuals to run knowledge transfer groups. Also, the on-line expression of interest and approval process means that the selection process will not be a significant administrative burden. This has been borne out in the extensive consultation process.

3.2.16. Knowledge Transfer Groups 2

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: Knowledge Transfer Groups 2

Description of the recommendation

Knowledge Transfer Groups - ensure that topics relevant to the restructuring of agriculture are included in the agenda of the menu of potential Groups

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. These topics will be included, for example via the inclusion of farm succession planning in Groups.

3.2.17. LEADER 1

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: LEADER 1

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - clarify the intended content of the social inclusion theme under LEADER and how this differs or relates to the social inclusion activities of local authorities on the one hand, and on the local partnership companies (the existing LAGs) on the other

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. While it is not possible to pre-empt what may emerge from the process of designing Local Development Strategies, it would be expected that social inclusion activities will feature. The development of Local Development Strategies will include the requirement that such activities will not duplicate existing initiatives in other fora.

3.2.18. LEADER 2

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: LEADER 2

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - clarify the role of the LCDC and of the LAG in relation to the economy and enterprise as there seem to be inconsistencies about this

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. While the funding to enterprise in rural areas delivered through LEADER will be a distinct funding stream focussed specifically on rural areas it will nevertheless be required to complement the funding delivered through national systems including Local Enterprise Offices at a sub-regional level. Programme management systems including common evaluation systems are currently being designed to support the implementation of the LEADER elements of the RDP that will ensure that all entities delivering enterprise support in a specific sub regional area are working together to ensure that the funding available to rural areas is maximised to support rural employment and job creation.

3.2.19. LEADER 3

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: LEADER 3

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - document the policy desirability and means by which access to appropriate expertise in the existing LAGs can be retained

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

The LEADER process will be open to all existing LAGs. This has been incorporated into measure design. Ireland has successfully implemented LEADER programmes over a number of programming periods, and it would be beneficial if this expertise was harnessed in the new RDP. The Expressions of Interest for selection of LAGs will be designed in a way that will incorporate this while also ensuring that an open process based on bottom up principles is in place.

3.2.20. LEADER 4

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: LEADER 4

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - clarify how the additional food measures are to be delivered using the LEADER approach

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

Following further consideration of the design of support in these areas, the support for these measures has been integrated into the LEADER measure. This will be clearly set out in the relevant Measure description.

3.2.21. LEADER 5

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: LEADER 5

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - establish more specific and clear objectives for the measure to be delivered under the LEADER model

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been incorporated into measure design. While certain LEADER themes have emerged from the preparatory analysis which are reflective of the Rural Development Priorities and Objectives set out in the Rural Development Regulation, the bottom up approach to the development of Local Development Strategies will also inform the process to a large extent.

3.2.22. LEADER 6

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: LEADER 6

Description of the recommendation

LEADER - a detailed LEADER Measure Implementation Plan should be prepared prior to commencement and presented to the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This will be undertaken as LEADER is rolled out.

3.2.23. Land Mobility

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Land Mobility

Description of the recommendation

Given the importance of the issue of land mobility and the extent to which the low levels of mobility hamper structural development and growth within the sector, provision should be made for a major study to investigate the factors which influence the land market in Ireland, how it varies over time and in particular why the scale of land market activity is at such a low level. This study should inform future policy development.

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

The issue of land mobility is clearly highlighted in the SWOT and Needs analyses. In light of this, a number of specific measures have been designed to address the issue and elements of other scheme designs have also incorporated this issue. This has been done in a way that complements Pillar 1 supports and other supports outside of the CAP process (e.g. taxation measures).

In relation to the specific recommendation for a research project, the Managing Authority has undertaken an informal review aimed at identifying best practice for the new National Rural Network (NRN) to be established under the RDP. One theme emerging from this is the potential for the NRN to focus on key policy and structural issues in the sector. Accordingly, this recommendation will be taken into account in the development of the NRN's Action Plan.

3.2.24. Locally Led Agri Environment Schemes

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: Locally Led Agri Environment Schemes

Description of the recommendation

Locally Led Agri-environment schemes - establish and develop the proposals for implementation structures for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel project(s), and the estimated timelines and delivery milestones for planning and implementation of all activities under this measure

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

Work is ongoing in relation to the development of this intervention, in close consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. As noted above, the local targeted schemes, including the Freshwater Pearl Mussel scheme, will be introduced at an early date by way of amendment to the RDP. It is intended to introduce the scheme in the latter half of 2015.

3.2.25. Organic Farming

Category of recommendation: Establishment of targets, distribution of financial allocations

Date:

Topic: Organic Farming

Description of the recommendation

Organic Farming Scheme - establish a programme target for the percentage of national UAA under organic production that reflects the financial provisions included in the RDP for this measure

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

As the development of the RDP progressed from the submission of the initial draft, a number of financial and indicator amendments were necessary. As part of this process both the financial allocation and associated targets for Measure 11 have been amended so that they correspond more closely to each other.

3.2.26. SWOT 1

Category of recommendation: The SWOT analysis, needs assessment

Date:

Topic: SWOT

Description of the recommendation

Some additional observations on gender equality and anti-discrimination should be incorporated into the SWOT and Needs analyses, even where only to observe their degree of relevance or non-relevance, the extent to which they arose in consultations, or the degree to which they feature as specific challenges in any areas.

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

Further material reflecting themes from the SWOT and consultation process has been added within

character restrictions.

3.2.27. SWOT 2

Category of recommendation: The SWOT analysis, needs assessment

Date:

Topic: SWOT

Description of the recommendation

Some further discussion or analysis of the following should be integrated into the SWOT and Needs analyses where possible:

- animal health and welfare;
- the training of agricultural advisors;
- on-farm investment specifically in the dairy sector, possibly to include data on farm borrowings and investments from the National Farm Survey;
- farm viability in designated areas of natural constraint;
- organic farming.

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

Re AHW, further material reflecting themes from the SWOT and consultation process has been added within character restrictions

Re CPD, further material reflecting themes from the SWOT and consultation process has been added within character restrictions

Re on farm investment, further material reflecting themes from the SWOT and consultation process has been added within character restrictions

Re ANCs, further material from recent RDP 2007-2013 Annual Progress Report has been added within character restrictions.

Re OFS further material reflecting themes from the SWOT and consultation process has been added within character restrictions

3.2.28. Structural Issues

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Structural Issues

Description of the recommendation

For the same reason, where possible existing measures in the Programme should address the structural issues in agriculture wherever possible and appropriate

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This has been taken into account in the design of particular measures. As noted above, it has not been possible to include prioritisation for young farmers in selection criteria for certain measures. However, the increased aid intensity available for young farmers under Measure 4 on farm capital investment, and the provision of support for collaborative farming will directly address this issue. In relation to the gender balance, there are areas where this will be taken up in the RDP, e.g.

- Support for collaborative farming will in effect provide greater access for new entrants including women
- The Action Plan to be developed for the NRN will include focus on specific sectoral challenges identified in the SWOT etc, including the gender issue.

It is important to note that the issue is also being addressed at national level. For example, the Agri Taxation Review Group has identified the issue as part of its ongoing work plan.

3.2.29. TAMS

Category of recommendation: Programme implementing arrangements

Date:

Topic: TAMS

Description of the recommendation

TAMS - ensure all indicators to be required (whether they form part of the performance framework, wider indicator plan, or evaluation plan and preparation) are established and confirmed prior to any roll out, so application details and requirements can reflect them

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

This is an important element of all measures, and has been incorporated into measure design (including application forms)

3.2.30. Technical Assistance

Category of recommendation: Other

Date:

Topic: Technical Assistance

Description of the recommendation

While there are various references to technical assistance in the draft RDP documentation provided, some composite statement should be made regarding of the strategic purpose to which the Technical Assistance resources will be put, and the ways in which it will support effective delivery and implementation

How recommendation has been addressed or justification as to why not taken into account

More explicit reference to the role of technical assistance outlined in RDP, outlining the main areas where technical assistance expenditure will be focused. Key elements that will support the effective implementation of the RDP include the funding of the NRN, and evaluation activities.

3.3. Ex-ante Evaluation report

See Annexed Documents

4. SWOT AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

4.1. SWOT

4.1.1. Comprehensive overall description of the current situation of the programming area, based on common and programme-specific context indicators and other qualitative up-to-date information

This SWOT analysis draws on a range of information both from within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and from external bodies and documents. In developing the analysis, the drawing of information from such a wide range of sources led to the situation arising whereby certain issues and factors were categorised as more than one of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The text below draws together a summary of all the information gathered during this process.

1. *Overall description*

This Situation Analysis is a comprehensive overall description of the current situation in Ireland. This is based on the EU common context indicators and programme specific context indicators, where appropriate, and also qualitative information. The text below draws together this information and is broken down into the following sections

- Definition of rural areas
- Geography and physical description
- Demographic Information
- General economic context
- The rural economy
- Agriculture and agri-business
- Income levels
- Environment and land management

4.1.1.1 *Definition of Rural Areas*

Ireland is by its nature very ‘rural’ and has a much higher percentage of its territory and population living in rural areas than the EU 27 average. [1] For example information presented in the 2012 European Commission report “Rural Development in the EU – Statistical and Economic Information” [2] confirms the significance of rural areas in Ireland. However, different definitions of ‘rural’ can be used on different occasions and by different data sources. Therefore references to ‘rural areas’ in this document may refer to different definitions depending on the data that is available.

For the purposes of their work, in accordance with their terms of reference, the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA)[4] defined rural Ireland as “all areas located beyond the administrative boundaries of the five largest cities.” Therefore the term “rural areas” was used to encompass open countryside, in addition to small, medium and large towns. This is the

definition adopted in the 2014 -2020 RDP.

This is particularly important for the support of the broader rural economy aspect of the RDP and in particular the community-led local development approach supported through LEADER. This will allow sub-regional areas to support the parts of their area where the most acute need is identified which may include rural towns and villages. These urban centres situated in rural areas are key to the sustainable development of their rural hinterlands and the importance of this is also highlighted in the CEDRA report. This is the primary reason for this chosen definition of rural areas.

4.1.1.2 Geography & Physical Description

Irish Territory & Climate

Ireland is situated in the North Atlantic on the Western peripheral edge of Europe, and its geography generally consists of a flat low lying midlands part of the country surrounded by coastal hills and low mountains. The total area of Ireland is some 70,270 square kilometres, of which around 98% is land and 2% is comprised of water. The land area of Ireland is approximately 6.9 million hectares (ha) of which around 5 million ha is Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA). At the end of 2012, forestry accounted for around 10.5% of the total land area according to the National Forest Inventory. [6]

The North Atlantic coastal drift contributes to Ireland's temperate climate which distinguishes it from other countries on the same latitude. Over the last approximately 50 years, average temperatures in Ireland have varied between 8 and 10.4 degrees Celsius. The thirty years moving average temperature shows that the average temperature is increasing. The average temperature for 1981-2010 was 0.5 degrees Celsius higher than the average for 1961- 1990. The wettest year was 2009, when 1,503 mms of rain were recorded and the average rainfall per year for the period since 2000 has been 1,236 mm. (In comparison the driest year in a roughly 50 year period was 1971, when only 915 mms of rain were recorded.) [7] The thirty years moving average rainfall is also increasing.

2005 data, the most recent year for which comparable data is available, point towards the major inherent difficulties from both an environmental and economic viability perspective in farming certain land in Ireland: 77.5% of the UAA in Ireland is classified as Less Favoured Areas (formerly Disadvantaged Areas) compared to the EU 27 equivalent which is less than 55%. Accordingly, support for Less Favoured / Disadvantaged Areas has been central in previous programming periods in providing a multifaceted response to the range of challenges facing farmers in these areas. These viability and environmental challenges will continue to the fore in the new programming period also.

European Comparisons

In relation to the EU Common Context Indicator data, the latest available CORINE data for 2006 shows Ireland to be quite different from the EU27 in terms of the structure of its land cover. Ireland

has a higher share of agricultural and natural land, but a lower share of some categories such as forestry land, woodland shrub and artificial land. For example the share of agricultural land in Ireland is more than 67% but the forestry land is only 4%. [8] The corresponding EU equivalents are around 47% and 30%.

Ireland has around 13% of its territory classified as Natura 2000, lower than the EU 27 equivalent which is almost 18%. In terms of the share of UAA and forestry area under Natura 2000, Ireland was also below the EU 27 average. Ireland has the smallest percentage of land in the EU designated as a Special Protected Area (SPA), under the EU Birds Directive, with only 3% of total land area designated as SPA in 2010. Ireland has proportionately less land designated as SCI (sites of community importance or SAC) (11%) under the EU Habitats Directive than the EU average of 14% in 2010. [9]

In territorial terms, more than 98% of Ireland is classed as Predominantly Rural (PR) and only 1.3% is defined as Predominantly Urban (PU) in the Eurostat definition. There is no territory classified as Intermediate in Ireland. In 2012 the EU average equivalents were 52% PR, 38% intermediate and 10% PU.

4.1.1.3 Demographic Information

2006 and 2011 CSO Census [10]

Ireland's population in 2011 was almost 4.6 million inhabitants. This represents an increase of around 8% from the 4.2 million found in the 2006 Census. Very high birth rates combined with low death rates and estimated net migration account for the population increase of around 350,000 persons over this period according to the 2011 CSO Census.

In 2011 the total urban population was 2.85 million people and the total rural population was 1.74 million people. So the urban population was 62% of the total population and the rural population was 38% of the total. This compares to 61% and 39% for urban and rural population respectively in 2006, so there has not been any major change in the urban-rural split in the period.

Between 2006 and 2011 the average number of persons per household fell from 2.8 to 2.7. Urban households tend to be smaller than rural households, although this trend is not new and has been evident for around 30 years. [11]

Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses there was a 17% increase in the number of students in Ireland. Education participation rates increased for those aged 15-24, reflecting both a long term trend towards increased participation in education and a greater uptake of third level education and the effects of the economic downturn which occurred in recent years. By 2012, almost 34% of those aged between 15-64 had a third level qualification compared to only 26.3% in 2006. By 2012, 71% of all persons aged 15-64 had attained education levels of higher secondary level or above compared to only 62% in 2006.[12] Levels of education tend to be lower in rural areas, compared to urban areas. This trend has also been noted in the CEDRA report.

Dependency ratios can provide a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young and old people shown as a percentage of the population of working age (i.e. aged 15-64). In Ireland, the total dependency ratio increased to 49.3% in 2011 from 45.8% in 2006, due to high birth rates. This indicates approximately one young or old person for every two people of working age. Urban areas have lower dependency ratio areas than rural areas in Ireland.

Ireland has been negatively affected by emigration as a result of the economic downturn in recent years. For example an estimated 89,000 people emigrated in the year ending April 2013, compared to immigration of 55,900. This has resulted in net emigration of 33,100. By way of contrast in the year ending April 2007, there was estimated net immigration of 67,300.[13] Emigration affects rural areas more than urban areas. According to a September 2013 UCC study, an estimated 27% of rural households have been affected by emigration compared to 15-17% of other households. [14]

EU Comparisons

EU Common Context Indicator data shows that, in 2012 around 72.5% of the total national population were living in Predominantly Rural (PR) areas and 27.5% were living in Predominantly Urban (PU) areas. Ireland was unusual in that it did not have any population living in Intermediate areas. The average figures for the EU27 were 22.5% in PR areas, 35% in Intermediate areas and 42.5% in PU areas.

In relation to age profile in 2012, overall almost 22% of the population was aged under 18, and only 12% was aged over 64 years of age. Very similar figures are found for rural areas. Across the EU the corresponding figures are 16% (aged under 18) and 18% (over 64 years of age), so Ireland has a lower share of old people compared to people of working age. Indeed, in 2011 Ireland had the lowest old-age dependency ratio (share of old people compared to people of working age) in the EU at 17%, compared to 26% for the EU.

The population density of around 70 inhabitants per square kilometre overall means that Ireland is much less densely populated than many other EU Member States, where this figure is 115 inhabitants per square km. However, population densities in rural areas are broadly similar in Ireland and the EU 27, with around 50 inhabitants per square km.

4.1.1.4 General Economic Context

The economic context at the start of the 2014–2020 RDP is markedly different to that found at the outset of the previous RDP. At the commencement of the 2007–2013 Rural Development Programme, the Irish economy was still on a strong upward path both with respect to growth and employment. After an average growth rate of about 5.7% in the years 2005–07, this trend halted when the economy shrank by 3% in 2008 and by over 5% in 2009. The major property bubble began to unwind from 2007, and the fall-out from this was exacerbated by the major deterioration in the external environment. As a result, GDP fell by around 15% from its peak in quarter four of 2007. Therefore, the economic environment is undoubtedly less propitious at the beginning of the 2014–2020 RDP than at the commencement of the 2007–2013 RDP.

Similarly, the labour market was extremely buoyant in the years previous to and including 2007 with strong growth in employment and very low levels of unemployment. In these years unemployment averaged about 4.5% and employment was growing by about 4% per annum. Employment in 2006 exceeded two million for the first time in the history of the state and the unemployment rate was only 4.3%. [15] In subsequent years unemployment began to increase, rapidly reaching 15% in 2012 with around 1.84 million people in employment.[16] The effects were particularly felt in rural areas as the construction sector went into rapid decline. According to Teagasc, between 2008 and 2010, the accumulated off-farm employment gain of farmers from the mid nineties was wiped out due to the economic crisis and in particular as a result of the construction crash.

Concerns remain about the increasing nature of long term unemployment. This accounted for almost 60% of all unemployment, and the long term unemployment rate was 8.1% in 2013.

The onset of the global financial crisis, combined with major domestic economic difficulties associated with the end of the ‘Celtic Tiger’, a collapse in property prices and the construction sector, and major difficulties in the banking sector have resulted in a much more straitened economic context for the 2014–2020 RDP than for the 2007–2013 RDP. For example there were three successive annual declines in the Irish economy from 2008 to 2010 and this resulted in a growing Government deficit and higher debt: GDP ratios. This culminated in the need for the Irish Government to enter the EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support.

This has since been followed by a more stable period, but with only very modest levels of economic growth being seen. The Irish economy grew slightly again in 2012 with the CSO indicating full-year growth in GDP during 2012 of 0.2%. There is some indication that the economy has gained momentum in the period since mid-2013. There are signs of a stabilisation in domestic demand, with data pointing to a gradual recovery in both consumer and investment spending. The strength of employment growth in recent quarters is also indicative of a modest recovery in domestic demand. In December 2013, Ireland emerged from the EU/IMF Programme of Financial Support.

Ireland, as a small open economy, continues to be driven by external economic events and the recovery of the Irish economy is heavily dependent on wider European and global economic growth. The Economic and Social Research Institute, and various economic commentators, have pointed out that any improvement in GDP growth looks set to be more subdued than previously had been expected as global economic activity is weaker. For 2013 real GDP growth of 0.2% is expected. In Budget 2014 (October 2013) real GDP growth of 2.0% (2014), 2.3% (2015) and 2.8% (2016) was forecast by the Department of Finance.[17]

The Government published its Medium Term Economic Strategy [18] in December 2013. This Strategy sets out the Government's approach to building and sustaining a competitive economy that can pay its own way, serve society, and that can survive and thrive in a reformed Eurozone and an increasingly globalised international economy. It provides an overall framework for social and economic policies that are being developed and implemented by the Government. It includes the Government's aim for a return to full employment by 2020, also reflected in the Action Plan for Jobs 2014,[19] and acknowledges the fact that improved economic regulation is a medium term priority for the Government, as this will enhance Ireland's international economic competitiveness. Although forecasts for the years up to 2016 had been available as part of Budget 2014, real GDP growth of an average 3.4% between 2017 and 2020 was profiled, given assumptions of steady growth in the world economy.

4.1.1.5 The Rural Economy

A 2010 European Commission report on the Future of Rural Areas [20] noted that although the development of rural areas is likely to become increasingly driven by factors outside agriculture, many rural areas, in particular remote and depopulated ones and those that are dependent on farming, will probably face particular challenges in relation to economic and social sustainability. Nonetheless it was noted that these areas have significant potential to meet the growing demand for the provision of rural amenities and tourism and as a store of natural resources and highly valued landscapes. However, this potential remains closely linked in many rural areas to the presence of a competitive and dynamic agri-food supply chain. Therefore, it can be difficult to separate the "agriculture" from the "rural", and this is particularly so in Ireland. Ireland is clearly a strongly rural country in population and territory terms,

and this reaffirms the importance of a well funded, designed and managed Rural Development Programme for the 2014-2020 period both for agriculture and the wider rural economy.

Clearly agriculture, which is discussed specifically in the next section, has a crucial part to play in the rural economy. However, there are various other sectors that are important in terms of the rural economy. EU Common Context Indicators for 2012 showed that Ireland had an overall unemployment rate of 14.7%, youth unemployment rate of 30.4% and rural (thinly populated) unemployment rate of 15.6%. The EU27 equivalents were 10.5%, 22.8% and 10% respectively. Rural employment accounted for 66% and urban employment accounted for 34% of the total employment in 2010. Due to Ireland's more rural character as referred to above, these figures are quite different to the EU27 totals, where rural employment was the least prevalent (around 21% of the total); intermediate employment (34% of the total) and urban employment were the most significant (45% of the total).

The rural economy and rural communities have experienced the negative impact of the economic crisis due largely to their heavy reliance on declining employment sectors, particularly the construction industry. This has resulted in an increase of 192% in unemployment in rural areas when compared to 114% in their urban counterparts[21]. This has had a knock on effect on the overall rural economy, and quality of life in rural areas, particularly in small and medium sized towns where the evidence of small town decline is clear throughout Ireland.

In a 2010 report where rural poverty and social exclusion on the Island of Ireland was examined[22] it was noted that, while poverty and social exclusion is more difficult to identify in a rural setting, there was evidence to suggest that rural areas continue to register lower average living standards than their urban counterparts. Generally the 'at risk of poverty' rating is higher in rural areas with the 2011 CSO/SILC statistics showing that the risk of poverty in rural areas (18.8%) is higher than in urban areas (14.2%).

The CEDRA research process and the performance of the LEADER/CLLD element of the current RDP indicate both the importance and the potential of community participation in development processes in rural Ireland.

Ireland is currently undergoing a process of local government reform that aims to facilitate a leadership role for local government in the local development process, and this will have an impact on the processes that support the delivery of rural development interventions. The aim is to create a system of local development, including rural development, that is coherent and cohesive and ensures that all funding opportunities available to rural areas are channelled through communities on the ground in order to maximise their impact. The new system will be fully cognisant of the need to involve rural communities in their own development choices, learning from the success of the LEADER approach to date to develop a local and rural development framework that will support the creation and development

of sustainable rural communities into the future.

4.1.1.6 Agriculture and Agri-Business

Food Harvest 2020

The need for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth has been set out at the EU level in the EU 2020 Strategy. This principle also lies at the heart of the "Food Harvest 2020" strategy, which is a national, industry led vision for the Irish agri food sector up to 2020. The Irish agri-food sector has set itself a number of targets including:

- Increase the value of primary output in the agriculture and fisheries sector by €1.5 billion by 2020 (33% increase compared to the 2007 – 2009 average);
- Increase the value-added output by €3 billion by 2020 (40% increase compared to 2008);
- Achieve an export target of €12 billion by 2020 (42% increase compared to the 2007 – 2009 average); and
- Various sectoral targets such as growth of 20% in the output value of the beef sector and a 50% increase in the production of milk by 2020. (Both of these are based on an average of 2007–2009 as a baseline.)

The agriculture and food sector can be considered one of the more successful parts of the economy, despite the ongoing impact of the recession. The September 2013 Food Harvest 2020 Milestones For Success report [24] showed that there have been growth rates in the agri food sector in excess of 25% (primary production), 20% (value added) and 13% (exports) demonstrating significant progress towards the overall targets for 2020.

Agriculture/Agri-Food in the Economy & Employment in the Agri-Food Sector

In the economy as a whole in 2012, the primary sector together accounted for 2.2% of Gross Value Added (GVA), the secondary sector accounted for 27.4% of GVA and the tertiary sector was responsible for 70.4% of GVA. This reflects a change since 2006, when the primary sector accounted for 2.5% of GVA, the secondary sector accounted for 35.1% of GVA and the tertiary sector was responsible for 62.5% of GVA, although the significance of the primary sector (agriculture, fishing and

forestry) has not changed very much.

However, this understates the relative importance of the overall broader agri-food sector, which is taken to include primary production along with food, beverages & tobacco and wood processing sectors. The agri-food sector remains very important to the wider rural economy and in turn to the Irish economy overall. It is estimated that the agri-food sector accounted for almost 8% of GVA at factor cost for 2011, the most recent year for which data is available. In 2006 the equivalent figure was under 7%. [25]

In terms of the structure of total employment in Ireland, data for 2012 shows that 4.7% of people in employment were employed in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and fishing), 18.4% in the secondary sector (industry and construction) and 76.9% in the tertiary sector (services and others). Employment in the agri-food sector accounted for almost 150,000 jobs. This was equivalent to 8% of total employment at the end of quarter four of 2012, which is similar to what was found in 2006. The composition of employment in the agri-food sector includes more than 90,000 people in agriculture, forestry and fishing and more than 47,000 people in food with the remainder, approximately 10,000 people, in beverages and wood processing.[26]

Agri-Food Exports [27]

Ireland's agriculture and agri-food industry is heavily dependent on Ireland's position as a small open economy and its ability to export. For example, Ireland successfully exports food products to 170 countries worldwide and is the largest net exporter of beef in Europe, and the fourth largest in the world. It is also a key player in the infant formula market and the largest exporter of infant formula in Europe.

Despite a more modest increase in exports in 2012 than in the two previous years, the food and drink sector continued to perform well. Figures from the CSO show that total Irish merchandise exports increased by around 1% to €9.2 billion in 2012, of which around 10% was accounted for by food and drink exports as categorised by Bord Bia (the Irish Food Board). Furthermore, the agri-food sector provides a significantly higher percentage of the net foreign earnings from merchandise exports than its overall export share, due to its low import content and the smaller role of foreign owned businesses in its export activities.[28]

The dairy and beef sectors were still the biggest export categories in 2012, representing €2.7 billion (29%) and €1.9 billion (21%) of total food and drinks exports respectively. Prepared foods accounted for €1.4bn (15%), while beverages contributed €1.3bn (14%). There have been small increases in the share of dairy and beef and declines in prepared foods and beverages compared to 2006. For example, in 2006 dairy and beef accounted for 25% (€2.1 bn) and 20% (€1.6 bn) respectively and prepared foods accounted for €1.7bn (21%), while beverages contributed €1.4bn (17%).

The UK market accounted for 42% of total Irish food and drink exports in 2012 compared to 45% in 2006. Exports to other European markets were 31% of the total in 2012 and also in 2006. Further afield, the food & beverages trade to countries outside Europe has grown slightly and these international markets now account for 27% of the overall total.

4.1.1.7 Agricultural Structures [29]

Over time there has been ongoing change in the structure of agriculture with fewer and larger farms, less employment, more specialisation and concentration of production, and growth in part-time farming. The recent CSO Census of Agriculture showed there were 139,829 farms in June 2010 compared to 141,527 farms in June 2000, a reduction of 1.2%, or less than 0.1% per year. However, the number of farms fell from 170,578 in the 1991 Census to 141,527 in 2000, a decline of 17%, or at an annual rate of about 1.5%. The decline in the number of farms in the period from 1980 to 1991 was also very substantial, at about 24% or 1.8% per annum.

The total overall Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) was almost 5 million hectares (ha) in June 2010. Commonage accounted for 422,415 ha, or 8.5% of this total. Around 80% of the UAA (excluding commonage) is accounted for by permanent grasslands and meadows and approximately 20% is rough grazing and crop production. Therefore Ireland is very different from the EU average where arable land accounts for 60%, permanent grasslands and meadows accounts for 34% and permanent crops accounts for 6% of the total UAA.

Less than 2% of Irish farms were under the size of 5 ha in 2010, around 40% were between 5 and 20 ha, and around 40% were between 20 and 50 ha. 15% of farms were between 50 and 100 ha, and less than 4% of farms were greater than 100 ha. This is in contrast to the EU27 figures, where 70% of farms are less than 5 ha and only 25% of farms were between 5 and 50 ha (compared to 80% in Ireland). Some Member States have much larger numbers of farms compared to Ireland, and are more reliant on large numbers of subsistence and semi-subsistence farms on very small plots.

The average farm size increased to 32.7 ha in 2010. Although this makes the average Irish farm more than twice the size of the EU 27 average of 14.3 ha, this average masks great disparities between various Member States. For example 7 Member States have an average farm size of more than 50 ha according to European Commission Common Context indicator data. Within Ireland too there are differences in the average farm size to be found in the two regions. Smaller farm sizes were found in the Border, Midland and West (BMW) region where the average farm size was 27.3 ha compared to the Southern & Eastern (S&E) region where the average farm size was 38.6 ha. Indeed, within these regions there was

further variability from 22.4 ha in Mayo to 37.1 ha in Westmeath in the BMW region, and, from 32.6 ha in Clare to 47.8 ha in Dublin in the S&E region.

The Census of Agriculture also shows other regional differences between farms, beyond the basic farm sizes. Dairy farms are more likely to be based in the S&E region. For example, more than 80% of national milk output and national cereal output is provided in the S&E region. Dairy and tillage farms tend to have a higher proportion of viable farms, greater income levels, greater returns per hectare and a lower reliance on the Single Farm Payment compared to sheep and cattle farms. The less profitable and viable sectors, such as cattle rearing and sheep, are more likely to be based in the BMW region.

Ireland was home to 6.6 million cattle, 4.75 million sheep and 1.5 million pigs in June 2010. This is equivalent to around 5.8 million livestock units based on the co-efficient used to convert individual animals into livestock units. In 2010, Ireland accounted for 6.8% of the total cattle population of the EU, the fifth highest in the EU 27.[30]

There has been a decline in the numbers and proportions of farmers in the younger age categories over the period from 1991 to 2007, with the proportion of farmers aged 44 or younger decreasing from 33% to 25%, and the proportion of farmers aged 65 and over increasing from 23% to 25%. By 2010, more than half of all Irish farmers were over 55 years and only 6% were under 35 years of age. The age profile of Irish farmers is increasing as the number of farmers aged under 35 fell by more than 50% between 2000 and 2010. Across the EU27, 7.5% of farmers were under 35% years of age in 2010.

Training figures for Irish farmers show that only 31% had either basic or full training in 2010. However, within the under 35 age category, 51% had either basic or full training.

Other structural challenges in the sector include high levels of short-term land rental, fragmentation of holdings, and low levels of land mobility and land sales.

4.1.1.8 Income Levels

Despite the impact of the recession, in 2012 Ireland's GDP per capita remained above the EU average. On an index where the EU27 is 100, the equivalent figure for Ireland was 127. However, rural GDP per capita was lower than the national figure, at only 103 on this index. The 2012 figures represent a decline on the 2006 figures when Ireland's GDP per capita was 145 on the same index.

In 2011 the risk of poverty was higher for rural areas compared to urban areas. The figures for the “at risk of poverty rate” were 14.2% (urban) and 18.8% (rural) according to the CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions. Compared to 2006, this represents a decline in the at risk of poverty rate for rural areas and almost unchanged figures for urban areas. In 2006 these figures were 14.3% (urban) and 21.5% (rural) respectively. [31]

Results from the 2012 Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS), which is carried out annually to fulfill the requirements of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN), showed that Family Farm Income (FFI) in 2012 was an average of some €25,500. Although this was a decline on the 2011 levels, FFI in 2012 were at their second highest level since 2005, when they were some €22,500 on average. It should be noted that FFI tends to fluctuate over any given period. For example, FFI in current prices fluctuated between €13,499 and €24,861 in the years from 2000 to 2011.

4.1.1.9 Environment & Land Management

General Environment

The 2012 EPA report “Ireland’s Environment – An Assessment” [32] is an integrated assessment of all aspects of Ireland’s environment. This finds that overall Ireland’s environment is generally in a good condition. However, it notes that there is no room for complacency and that there will be various challenges in the upcoming years in order to meet EU commitments and targets. These include water, waste and air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Overall Ireland’s water quality can be considered as quite good and Ireland has a better than average water quality relative to other Member States. For example Ireland had the fourth best bathing water quality, comprising both coastal and inland bathing sites, in the EU in 2010, when 90% of sites complied with guide values. The same results were found in 2006. In terms of river quality there have not been major changes between the 2004-2006 period and the 2007-2009 period (the latest period for which data is available). The level of seriously polluted river water has fallen to less than 1%, and the moderately polluted amount remains at 10%. A decrease in the percentage of unpolluted rivers and an increase in the amount of slightly polluted rivers over the same period however highlights the need for continued action here.

Water quality indicators show that in relation to surface water (nitrates in freshwater), in 2010 around 75% of sites were considered to be of high quality, 24% of sites were of moderate quality and 1% of sites were considered poor quality. In relation to ground water (nitrates in freshwater), around 85% of sites were considered to be of high quality and 15% of sites were of moderate quality. For both of these

indicators Ireland compares favourably to the EU average.

Overall, air quality in Ireland is of a high standard. Air quality in Ireland has improved quite considerably over the last decade and in 2010 it met all EU standards. By 2010, emissions for three of the four pollutants (sulphur dioxide, ammonia and non-methane volatile organic compounds) under the National Emission Ceiling Directive were below their respective emissions ceilings. However emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) are high, particularly in areas impacted by heavy traffic.

Greenhouse gas emissions have been falling in Ireland in recent years. In 2006, the total GHG emissions were almost 68.9 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. Over subsequent years this declined by around 11% to around 61.3 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.[34] After agriculture, the energy and transport sectors are the biggest contributors, and this was the case in both 2006 and 2010. In 2010, Ireland had the second highest level of per capita greenhouse emissions in the EU and was exceeded only by Luxembourg. However, in terms of per capita carbon dioxide emissions, at the same time, Ireland ranked the ninth highest in the EU.

Ireland's primary energy requirement fell from around 16 million tonnes of oil equivalent (t.o.e.) in 2006 to 14.8 million t.o.e. in 2010. Final energy consumption as a proportion of the primary energy requirement was around 82% in both 2006 and 2010. Transport accounted for 40% of Ireland's final energy consumption in 2010 compared to only 2% accounted for by agriculture. Wind has become the main source of renewable energy production and accounted for more than 40% of the total in 2010. [35]Renewable energy production from agriculture and forestry is discussed in the next section.

In terms of waste, the amount of municipal waste generated in Ireland fell from 800 kilograms per capita in 2006 to 620 kilograms per capita in 2010. Nonetheless, Ireland still had the fourth highest waste generated per capita in the EU. Municipal waste sent to landfill was just below 1.5 million tonnes in 2010 which was an improvement on around two million tonnes in 2006. Recovery rates of packaging waste and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collected from private households in Ireland are both quite high compared to European norms. [36]

Agriculture & Environment

The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook for 2012-2021[37] has clearly noted that "The key issue facing global agriculture is how to increase productivity in a more sustainable way to meet the rising demand for food, fuel and fibre". Agricultural production needs to increase by 60% over the next 40 years in order to meet the rising demand for food, brought about by an increasing global population as well as changing dietary patterns in certain countries as they develop. FAO analysis predicts that by 2050 the world population will increase to an expected 9 billion people. The FAO-OECD report also noted that

much can be done to contribute towards these objectives in a complementary fashion. An Irish Government report on Delivering our Green Potential notes that “Ireland is in an enviable position to produce the type of food that a growing number of consumers are demanding in relation to high quality sustainable food production and environmental standards.”

Irish agriculture is predominantly extensive and grass-based. This system of livestock production has some inherent environmental advantages and Ireland has a very positive reputation in terms of its green credentials. This is evidenced by the European Commission Joint Research Committee report evaluating the Greenhouse Gas Effects of European Livestock (GGEELS report)[38]. Cattle tend to be grazed outdoors as opposed to being housed indoors and there is no dependence on irrigated land and low abstraction pressure on water bodies from the industry overall.

Between 2000 and 2010, Ireland reduced its GHG emissions from agriculture by more than 10%. Nonetheless, there are high GHG emissions from livestock production systems especially ruminants in Ireland. In 2012 agriculture accounted for 32.1% of total GHG emissions of 57.92 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, corresponding to around 18.6 million tonnes.[39] Ammonia emissions were equal to 107,000 tonnes. GHG emissions are projected to increase by 7% between 2010 and 2020 and so increasing the carbon efficiency of agricultural production poses a challenge. While Ireland met its target for ammonia emissions under the National emissions ceilings (NEC) directive for 2010, Irish agriculture contributes 98.5% of national ammonia emissions or 107,000 tonnes.

The agricultural area under organic farming in Ireland is relatively small, at just over 41,000 hectares, with some 11,000 in conversion in 2012. This is only around 1% of the overall UAA. For the EU 27 the equivalent figure is 3.7%.

In terms of the production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry, in 2010 Ireland produced 34.4 kToe (kilo tonnes of oil equivalent) from agriculture and 197 kToe from forestry. Ireland is relatively more dependent on forestry than agriculture for renewable energy than other Member States. There have been acknowledged difficulties in getting bioenergy established in Ireland, in part owing to the high establishment costs. During 2011, agriculture and forestry were responsible directly for the use of 251 kToe and the food industry was responsible for the use of 474 kToe. [40] Also for 2011, agriculture and forestry were estimated to have used 47 kilograms of oil equivalent per hectare of UAA. This is around 70% of the EU27 equivalent of 66.8 kilograms of oil equivalent, testament to the green credentials and inherent sustainability of Ireland’s rain fed, grass based agricultural production systems.

In terms of farming intensity, defined as the UAA managed by farms with low, medium or high input intensity per hectare, in 2007 Ireland had 47% of its UAA classed as low intensity, 32% as medium intensity and 21% as high intensity. The EU27 figures were lower for low intensity and higher for high intensity farming. In 2010 for example, grazing accounted for around 45% of the total UAA in Ireland,

more than the EU27 total which was under 30%.

The Farmland Bird Index figure for 2008 was 92.4, compared to a base index of 100 for the year 2000. However, work completed for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine by Birdwatch Ireland found that the state of Ireland's common and widespread breeding bird populations overall is favourable for the period 1998 to 2009. While some species of conservation concern in Ireland are also faring well, showing stability during this period, other species such as the corncrake, hen harrier, chough, twite, grey partridge and breeding waders have declined. Most species that were selected as farmland indicators were stable or increased during this period.

Forestry

Total forest cover in Ireland in 2014 was estimated to be in the region of 744,000 ha or 10.7% of the total land area. Of this area, nearly 396,000 ha, or 54.1%, is in public ownership. Some 17,000ha of Irish forests are regarded as ancient or long established native woodland. Since 1990 Ireland has had the highest rate of increase in forest cover among EU Member States. Sitka spruce is the most common species, occupying 52.4% of the forest area. Over one quarter of the forest estate contains broadleaves. Of the broadleaves 54.5% are 'Other broadleaf species' (both long living and short living), of which over half are willow. The next largest broadleaf species group is birch species (22.7%), ash (12.5%), followed by oak (10.2%). Nearly three quarters of the stocked forest area is less than 30 years of age. Forest management plans are required at establishment stage for all grant aided forest and again in year 12 for broadleaf and conifer forests over 5ha.

Ireland's island status, the relative newness of the forest estate and the enforcement of plant health regulations have enabled its forests to remain free of many of the major European forest diseases and pests. However, with growing globalisation of the economy and the increase in air travel and tourism, maintaining Ireland's relatively healthy forest status is increasingly challenging. In terms of specific biotic threats, there have been confirmed findings of *Chalara fraxineam*, or ash dieback, which was first identified in Ireland in October 2012, while *Phytophthora ramorum* is a relatively new serious disease of tree and shrub species which can cause significant damage.

[1] All statistics used pre-date the accession of Croatia to the European Union and so EU 27 figures are used as opposed to EU28 figures.

[2] <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/statistics/rural-development/>

[3] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-HA-10-001/EN/KS-HA-10-001-EN.PDF

- [4] <http://www.ruralireland.ie/>
- [5] <http://www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/images/NSSMap2.JPG>
Ireland's regions: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NUTS_3_statistical_regions_of_the_Republic_of_Ireland
- [6] <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/nfi/nfisecondcycle2012/>
- [7] Met Eireann data in CSO report
<http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>
- [8] This figure differs from that used elsewhere in the overall analysis as it comes from a different data source (CORINE 2006 vs. other data sources)
- [9] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>
- [10]
<http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011pdr/Census,2011,Highlights,Part,1,web,72dpi.pdf>
- [11] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2013/fullbook.pdf>
- [12] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2013/fullbook.pdf>
- [13] CSO Population and Migration Estimates
http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2007/popmig_2007.pdf
<http://cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2013/>
- [14] <http://www.ucc.ie/en/emigre/>
- [15] <http://cso.ie/en/media/duplicatecsomedia/newmedia/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2007/Chapter,2,Labour,Market.pdf>
- [16] <http://cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/statisticalyearbookofireland/statisticalyearbookofireland2013edition/>
- [17] <http://budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2014/Documents/Economic%20and%20Fiscal%20Outlook%202014.pdf>
- [18] <http://finance.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=7950> and <http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/MTES.pdf>
- [19] <http://www.djei.ie/publications/2014APJ.pdf>
- [20] Situation and Prospects for EU Agriculture and Rural Areas December 2010 (p. 41)
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/situation-and-prospects/2010_en.pdf

[21] CEDRA

[22] Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion on the Island of Ireland, Dr Kathy Walsh, October 2010, <http://www.cwc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Rural-Poverty-and-Social-Exclusion-on-the-Island-of-Ireland-%E2%80%93-Challenges-Policies-and-Challenges.pdf>

[23]

[24] <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/agri-foodindustry/foodharvest2020/Milestones2013110913.pdf>

[25] DAFM, Annual Review and Outlook, for various years

http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/publications/2008/ARO_En07-08.pdf

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/publications/2013/ARODocumentFinalPDF2013050613.pdf>

[26] These employment figures correspond to International Labour Organisation definitions and relate to persons who indicated that agriculture was their principal source of income in the week prior to the QNHS. Therefore persons that work in agriculture but whose primary source of income is off-farm are not included.

[27] Bord Bia, Market Reviews - Export Performance & Prospects Reports for various years available at

<http://www.bordbia.ie/industryservices/information/publications/marketreviews/pages/default.aspx>

[28] An estimate for 2005 was that the 'bio-sector' contributed 32% of net foreign earnings from merchandise exports.

[29] Results in this section from the CSO - Census of Agriculture 2010 – Final Results, December 2012 unless otherwise stated

<http://cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/agricultureandfishing/censusofagriculture2010-finalresults/>

[30] CSO Environmental Indicators 2012

[31] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2013/fullbook.pdf>

<http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/statisticalyearbook/2009/Chapter,3,Social,Inclusion...pdf>

[32] <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/indicators/irelandsenvironment2012.html>

[33] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>

[34] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>

[35] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>

[36] <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/environment/2012/eii2012.pdf>

[37] <http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/agriculture-and-food/oecd-fao-agricultural->

outlook-2012_agr_outlook-2012-en#page1

[38] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&obj_id=13010&dt_code=NWS

[39] http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/air/airemissions/Ire_GHG_Emissions_1990_2012_handout.pdf

[40] Some estimation is required in the calculation of this data and that needs to be considered

4.1.2. Strengths identified in the programming area

A wide range of issues were identified as being current strengths. These are summarised and grouped together under various sub-headings below.

Food Harvest 2020 and the Agri-Food Sector

Food Harvest 2020 sets out a cohesive roadmap for the agri-food industry to build capacity, adapt to challenges and grow in the context of emerging opportunities in the decade to 2020. The fact that this is an agreed plan from the major stakeholders in the agri-food industry is in itself a major strength. Its central message of supporting smart, green growth aims to build upon the sustainability, quality and brand recognition of Irish food.

Many of the themes central to FH2020 are coherent with the themes emerging from the wide ranging preparatory analyses underlying the development of Ireland's RDP as well as with the objectives and priorities as set out in the Rural Development Regulation. For example, greater competitiveness in the sector, increased levels of innovation, coherence with environmental goals and challenges, regional development and security and growth in employment are common themes which reflect some of the shared policy goals which will underpin both national and European investment.

Quality Assurance

Robust quality assurance schemes are in place in the beef, pigmeat, poultry and horticulture sectors through Bord Bia. Carbon measurement is now part of the Bord Bia scheme and a dairy scheme is being piloted. Origin Green is a further innovation in this area in terms of demonstrating the commitment of Irish food and drink producers to sustainability in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation, water management and biodiversity.

Animal Welfare

Ireland has robust disease monitoring systems and high animal welfare standards overall and its system of traceability in relation to food production has been acknowledged by stakeholders. However, it is clear that continued development in this area is required particularly given the strong economic rationale underlying investment in animal health and welfare. For example, the savings arising from the eradication of Bovine

Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) are estimated at €102 million per annum, and the potential savings associated with Somatic Cell Count (SCC) reduction are of the order of €80 million per annum.

Education, research and knowledge transfer.

Ireland has a well established and high quality public research and development system in general and in the agri-food and rural development sectors. There are various nationally funded programmes in these areas. Irish researchers have leveraged almost 2% of the available European research budget (Seventh Framework Programme) to support capacity building and innovation in the agriculture, food, forestry, marine and biotechnology research areas. The research performing organisations (Teagasc, Universities and Institutes of Technology) are well recognised and reputable and have experience in the areas of technology and product development. There are well developed inter and intra institutional collaboration fora, e.g. Science Foundation Ireland and Teagasc collaboration. Strategic research agendas for both sustainable agriculture production and food have been published and are being implemented. However, there is recognition that improvements are needed in terms of applying this research and strengthening its links to innovation.

A variety of bodies are capable of providing appropriate education to farming, forestry and rural enterprises. Farm advisory services are performing well. Teagasc in particular combines research and extension to deliver solutions and advice at the farm level. For example, in 2009 replies to Teagasc customer comment cards for recipients of the Teagasc advisory service indicated that 74% were very satisfied with the service and a further 21% were satisfied with the quality of service received [1]. There is ongoing development of education programmes by Teagasc, Universities and Institutes of Technologies. Discussion groups have been funded for the dairy, beef and sheep sectors. The BETTER farm programme (through Teagasc, Irish Farmers Journal and Industry Stakeholders) is exploring opportunities for improving profitability in beef. This will all help to facilitate knowledge transfer, and the analysis identifies this as an area of strength which can be built on.

A theme which emerged during this analysis was that this strength could be built upon by ensuring that advisory services are founded on the best available knowledge base, possibly via the provision on continued professional development for advisors.

EU Supports and Schemes

Ireland has benefited from participation in a range of EU schemes and supports and these continue to be a key support in rural Ireland. For example, direct payments contribute to the viability of existing farmers. The Single Farm Payment increases income and reduces income variability which is positive in relation to risk management as noted by the OECD.[2] Furthermore, participation in previous EU funded schemes and measures has provided DAFM with a valuable learning experience in a range of policy areas such as facilitating early retirement of older farmers and the installation of young farmers.

Ireland's Green Reputation

The temperate Irish climate is generally well suited to its low cost grass based agriculture production systems and forestry. Ireland's green reputation is well founded and it has very carbon efficient livestock production systems. In terms of dairy and beef production systems, Ireland ranks 1st and 5th respectively in the EU (EU & JRC Evaluation of the livestock sector's contribution to the EU greenhouse gas emissions report). Irish cattle spend more time grazing outdoors compared to indoor housing, which results in lower ammonia emissions and there has been a reduction in ammonia emissions over the past decade. For the meat and dairy sectors which are both traditionally intensive water users, low levels of water abstraction have been found for Irish production. This is because natural sources such as rainfall are more important than abstracted/irrigated water compared to other countries. Therefore there is low abstraction pressure overall on water bodies in Ireland as a result of these sectors. Furthermore, approximately 90% of Irish agricultural land is in permanent grassland and acts as an important carbon sink. This also minimises the risk of soil erosion.

There has traditionally been a very high level of participation in agri-environment schemes in Ireland under the RDP. For example there was a peak participation of more than 60,000 farmers (around half of all farmers) in voluntary agri-environment schemes in 2009. Although participation varied greatly across different farming systems, it was more heavily concentrated amongst more extensive and smaller dry stock farmers on the Western sea-board, compared to the Southern and Eastern region.

Ireland has maintained an afforestation grant and premium scheme since the early 1980's. The level of broadleaf planting as a percentage of overall afforestation has increased from 23% in 2003 to 31% in 2012 (the target is 30% broadleaf afforestation). Ireland has experience in running schemes designed to enhance biodiversity and the amenity value of woodlands. For example, schemes promoting investment in existing native woodlands and also in establishing new native woodlands. The Native Woodland Establishment Scheme has a mainly environmental focus and is aimed at extending native woodland cover and associated biodiversity in Natura 2000, acid sensitive sites and riparian areas. Support under this scheme is provided for the planting of native broadleaves and the retention of species rich habitats such as fens and species rich grasslands. Close to nature forest management is encouraged under this scheme.

There is also an extensive network of hedgerows and other landscape features which are central to ecosystem enhancement. Approximately 450,000 hectares is covered by hedgerows, individual trees and small woodland patches and scrubs as shown by the Teagasc Irish Hedge Map in 2010.

Irish forests established since 1990 will have sequestered 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over the 5-year commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012). Private forestry is fast becoming a considerable wood and energy resource. Most of the private forest estate has been established over the past two decades, with many areas now entering into production and some small scale bioenergy schemes are already underway in Ireland.

Overall, Ireland's water quality can be considered as quite good, and Ireland has a better than average water

quality relative to other Member States. Based on the European Environment Agency's water database, Ireland typically ranks within the top third of more than 30 countries assessed in terms of water quality (phosphate, ammonia, nitrate and biochemical oxygen demand) for the 2007-2009 period. Also, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 80% of around 1,500 water bodies have either high/good/moderate status. Only 20% therefore are seen as either poor or bad. Although the EPA also notes that there is no room for complacency, River Basin Management plans (under WFD) are now in place and could be further developed.

Ireland is an important staging post and destination for migratory birds with several Natura 2000 sites hosting significant populations of birds rare elsewhere in Europe as well as internationally important wetland bird communities. This is acknowledged by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in "Actions for Biodiversity 2011–2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan".

Ireland also has a network of Natura 2000 sites corresponding to 13% of the country's area and there are an estimated 1.1 million hectares of High Nature Value farmland. Peat soils cover 20.6% of Ireland's land area, with the greater part of this in the form of blanket bog in upland areas. This high level of peatland is a good carbon store in its undisturbed state. Near intact peatlands may actively sequester, on average, 57,400 tonnes of carbon per year.

Soil organic matter levels are not considered to be a particular challenge in Ireland, with the extensive grassland production systems being a key factor. Even on arable soils the average soil organic matter is a healthy 6.6%, with less than 1% of tillage parcels sampled found to be under the target value of 3.4%. These combined factors also mean that soil erosion risk are minimal in Ireland, and this is consistent with previous analysis carried out by the Joint Research Centre (JRC Pan European Soil Erosion Risk Assessment) showing that Irish soils are broadly categorised as low erosion risk.

Community Based Rural Development

Ireland has been delivering elements of Rural Development funding using the LEADER approach since 1991, and has a long history of local development led by communities themselves.

A central element in many local development projects has been tourism, and Ireland is an internationally renowned tourist destination and has a unique cultural identity all over the world. The number of overseas trips to Ireland increased to 6.6 million in 2011 and the total overseas tourism earnings increased to €3,580 million. Rural Ireland itself has a strong and recognisable identity and a high-quality and evocative landscape which has the capacity to act as a resource for its economic development. Rural tourism has grown during the 2007–2013 period and Ireland has become known for its superior product and interesting holiday options, including cycling and walking holidays. Some rural areas have been exemplary in their presentation of their areas in a tourism context, and there are many informal examples of networks supporting the rural tourism sector, including Trail Kilkenny and the Fuchsia branding initiative in West Cork.

There are well-established networks in rural areas which facilitate the establishment of community-based services and support economic activity in rural areas. The level of community based project activity

indicates the presence of strong and self-reliant rural communities. Expenditure in the 2007-2013 RDP under the community measures made up 55% of the overall Axis 3 expenditure, and many of these projects are capital projects originating from community activity and the establishment of community networks. There is a wide-spread network of enterprise centres in smaller settlements, which can facilitate the establishment of micro-enterprises and SMEs.

Food and Food Chain

There is a relatively well developed network of farmers markets and country markets around Ireland and a strong history of co-operative based production in dairying.

[1] These were the latest available surveys at the time of writing.

[2] <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5kg6z83f0s34.pdf?expires=1366207663&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=94A93D975DAA8C2CCFCD974B9C89BB6A>

4.1.3. Weaknesses identified in the programming area

A wide range of issues were identified as being current weaknesses. These are summarised and grouped together under various sub-headings below.

The Economic Context

Overall, the general national and international macro-economic environment and outlook remains challenging. For example, the ESRI has concluded that improvement in GDP growth in 2013 looked set to be more subdued than previously thought as global economic activity is weaker. Any growth in the Irish economy, as a small open economy, continues to be driven by external events and the recovery of the Irish economy is heavily dependent on world economic developments.

The rate of unemployment remains at almost 14% (Quarter 2 2013) and on-going net emigration is the main driving force behind any reductions. The continued high unemployment rate and increasingly its long term nature is evident in Ireland, especially in rural areas. There are declining off-farm employment opportunities in rural Ireland in general. For example, in 2006 59% of farmers/spouses had off farm employment but in 2012 this was only 49% according to Teagasc.

Farm Viability

Within agriculture, the beef and sheep sectors in particular continue to experience low profitability, viability challenges and an over reliance on direct payments and subsidies. On average direct payments/subsidies

accounted for 82% of Family Farm Income, across all farm types and sizes in 2012. This represents an increase from 73% in 2011. In 2012 the proportion of economically viable farms decreased to 38% from 41% in 2011. A higher proportion of viable farms were found in the dairying and tillage sectors and a lower proportion of viable farms were found in the beef and sheep sectors. For example, according to the 2012 Teagasc National Farm Survey, only 18% of cattle rearing farms and 29% of other cattle farms were considered viable.

Particular issues arise in areas designated as Less Favoured Areas (LFAs). For example, in 2010, FFI for farmers in receipt of LFA payment was €348 per hectare before the payment under the scheme was taken into account. The figure for farmers not in the LFA Scheme was €609 per hectare. Output per hectare and gross margins per hectare are also higher for non LFA farms. CSO standard output data further reinforces the fact that in districts with non designated land, the returns are consistently higher than in districts with designated land. Teagasc have also undertaken viability analysis which shows that the viability rate, as measured by farms with incomes plus a return on investment greater than the minimum agricultural wage, is higher in non-LFA than LFA areas and farms. Addressing such viability issues is a key policy issue in its own right. However, it is important to note that there is also a fundamental link to issues of biodiversity maintenance, landscape preservation and environmental sustainability, in terms of supporting the continuation of environmentally sustainable farming practices on land that might otherwise fall out of use, or become abandoned.

Many Irish suckler farmers are very small scale and inefficient. Within sectors there are major differences between the efficient and inefficient producers. Amongst beef farmers there is a very low take-up of breeding technology and best practices which could contribute to greater efficiency at farm level. For example the Irish beef herd produces 80 calves per 100 cows and the average calving interval in 2011 was 407 days. However, the top fifteen per cent of farmers achieve 95 calves per 100 cows and a 365 day calving interval (Veterinary Ireland/ICBF).

A further sub-sector which faces particular challenges and restrictions is the island farming cohort. For example, particular viability challenges for island farmers include isolation, high infrastructure, input, and transport costs and land quality issues.

Structural Issues

51% of farmers are over 55 years, and only 6% are under 35 years of age, and the age profile of Irish farmers is getting worse. The number of farm holders aged under 35 fell by 53% between 2000 and 2010. This age imbalance affects farm viability and competitiveness in a number of ways. Older farmers are less likely to introduce innovative practices related to diversification, market orientation and restructuring. Furthermore, cultural and traditional ties to land ownership and resistance within farming to inter-generational transfer continue to work against early transfer to young farmers. Nearly half of farmers do not have an identified farming successor. This situation is compounded by the fact that there are limited options to enter farming, apart from the traditional inheritance option. Ireland has little tradition of share farming and low levels of partnerships and collaborative initiatives. There are few opportunities for inter-generational transfer of knowledge and young people are not working in tandem with older farmers on a

widespread basis.

In undertaking the preparation of this RDP, the horizontal principles relating to anti-discrimination and equality were carefully considered. The issue of gender equality emerged most strongly from the consultation process in this regard. There is a significant gender imbalance within agriculture with more than 90% of farm holders being men. Women have higher education at school and university and this is manifested now in the employment rate of women under 35 being higher than for men. Within farm households, women are now generating significant market incomes and are often the main breadwinner within the household, in addition to undertaking traditional non-market activities within the household. A continuation of this gender imbalance is thus detrimental in terms of the human capital capacity of the sector and may also inhibit technology uptake and structural change.

The low level of entrepreneurial and business skills among farmers also works against innovation, restructuring and enhanced competitiveness, as found by Teagasc in their report on this issue. Less than one third of Irish farmers had either basic or full agricultural training, so more than two thirds were without any formal agricultural education or training. There is poor awareness among farmers of risk management tools and the need for brand development and low levels of business acumen and skills has been noted. .

Restructuring of the agriculture sector is difficult to achieve for a number of further reasons which can all be considered as weaknesses. There is a high level of short-term and conacre land rental and limited long term leasing in Ireland which works to discourage farmers from undertaking investment on land improvements. There is a low level of land sales which prohibits entry and restructuring - worsening farm fragmentation situation with an average of 3.8 parcels per farm in 2010 compared to 1.9 parcels in 1991. Finally, the limited average size of Irish farms at 32.7 hectares remains a key constraint.

Farmers in the market place

Within agriculture and the food sector there is a continued heavy reliance on the UK and EU markets in terms of exports. For example, in 2012 the UK accounted for around 44% of the total for agri-food, fish and forestry exports. The EU accounted for 75% and non EU (third country) markets were only 25% of agri-food, fish and forestry exports.

Irish farmers are generally price takers in commodity markets rather than price setters in short food supply chains. There are weaknesses in the bargaining power of producers and it can be challenging to break into the market due to the dominance of major multiples. There is a very high level of concentration at retail level with three multiples having close to 70% of the retail market. It can be costly to meet retailer demands and standards so entry to and maintenance of position in the retail trade is difficult. Distance from the market can also be a problem for primary producers.

Small farm size can limit opportunities to maximise efficiency in production and marketing. Farmers can encounter difficulties with the low availability of capital for investment in expansion, new product development and marketing. Overall the number of producer groups is small, there are only around 20 producer groups in the country producing lamb, milk, beef and processed foods. All of these factors make it difficult to shorten the food supply chain.

Environmental and Biodiversity Issues

Nationally, although significant progress has been made in the past decade, biodiversity loss has not been halted in Ireland, as noted in the National Biodiversity Plan. In the 2013 ‘Status of EU Protected Habitat and Species in Ireland’, which includes updated information on the status of certain Natura 2000 sites only 9% of the habitats examined had a “favourable status”, 50% were “inadequate” and 41% were assessed as “bad”. Of the 61 species examined, 52% were assessed as “favourable”, 20% as “inadequate”, 12% as “bad” and a further 16% were “unknown”. While the level of High Nature Value (HNV) lands in Ireland has been noted above, the concept of HNV land is not yet fully established in Ireland and HNV land has not been specifically designated or mapped. However, some case studies/pilot studies have been completed and further information is expected soon through research funded by DAFM under the Research Stimulus Fund.

While HNV land is not definitively mapped in Ireland HNV land generally refers to areas where agriculture is a major (usually the dominant) land use and where that agriculture supports, or is associated with, either a high species and habitat diversity or the presence of species of European conservation concern, or both. The basis used for specifying HNV land in Ireland is to reference land that is a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Natural Heritage Areas designated nationally. Habitats associated with traditional farming practices are under pressure and in need of conservation. As farms are small and habitats are fragmented it can be difficult to disseminate information related to biodiversity. There could be improvements in the linkage between advisory services and the targeting of measures in priority ecosystems.

The EPA has noted that there are ongoing water quality issues in certain sensitive catchments and there is a need to address biodiversity loss and water quality in sensitive areas. Although nitrate levels are low, they are not decreasing. It is expected that the number of farmers requiring derogations will increase. There is scope for improvement in the governance and management of the river basin districts (RBDs). While other environmental practices have become well established amongst farmers through REPS and AEOS, the future need for increased water conservation and efficient use is not yet as fully appreciated. Uptake under the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme under the 2007–2013 RDP has been low, with only around 50 applications received by January 2013. Behavioural and cultural changes are required at farm level to adopt new practices.

Ireland has very high greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from agriculture as a proportion of total GHG emissions. In 2012 Ireland’s total GHG emissions were some 58 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; 32% of this was from agriculture. This is due to the high dependence on animal production systems. Ireland was home to 6.75 million cattle, 5.17 million sheep and 1.57 million pigs in June 2012. Most ammonia mitigation is already in place, with a limited amount of cost effective mitigation measures remaining.

Despite longstanding support for afforestation (as referenced above) Ireland also has a low level of forestry cover, just under 11% of land area compared to an EU27 average of 38%.

There are also low levels of organic farm production. For example, across the EU in 2010, 5.7% of the total UAA was devoted to organic crops. However, in Ireland the corresponding figure was around 1.1%. While the organic sector in Ireland is relatively small in relation to agriculture as a whole, the sector does represent an area for potential growth and the target of 5% of UAA remains in place. Consequently, the Department should continue to directly support the sector.

Despite a near trebling in demand between 2003 and 2011 for renewable energy, there are still relatively low levels of production and use overall in Ireland. The contribution of renewable energy to overall energy demand was only 6.5% in 2011, whereas the target is to achieve 16% by 2020 under EU Directive 2009/28/EC. There is a lack of market development for the bioenergy sector due to the high investment costs required for energy sector development, lack of finance and problems with the supply chain for bioenergy production, in terms of the need to better join up supply and demand. The continued use of peat and turf as energy sources also erodes an important carbon sink. In many cases, individual farms are too small to consider investing in projects such as anaerobic digestion for renewable energy production and farmers that get involved in biomass production tend to do so on a small scale.

Broader Rural Economy

The nature of the evolution of rural areas in Ireland has resulted in a diverse range of challenges when it comes to supporting the development of the broader rural economy. The nature of poverty and disadvantage in rural areas is very hard to define. However there are some distinct characteristics to rural poverty that distinguish it for policy purposes. One of the main characteristics of rural disadvantage is the issue of peripherality and distance to/from larger service centres. Rural areas are often geographically remote and require individuals to travel to access public services. In the recent past this has resulted in the rationalisation of public services such as post offices, which for many has compounded the isolation and remoteness of some rural areas.

The 2010 update of the National Spatial Strategy found that growth in rural areas has been significantly below the national rate and the growth that has occurred has to a substantial extent been linked to growth in nearby urban centres[1]. CEDRA research has shown that there has been a significant population shift from more remote regions towards the core economic areas, but also from central urban areas to surrounding hinterlands. The relationships that characterise this pattern have developed over time and as a result of the many challenges faced by rural areas particularly in the last 20 years. In this context different types of rural areas face different challenges which in turn present significant challenges when designing and implementing operational programmes.

Infrastructural Issues for Rural Ireland

The 2011 Survey on Income and Living Conditions found that the risk of poverty in rural areas (18.8%) is higher than in urban areas (14.2%). Remoteness and access to basic services are a contributory factor to poverty in rural areas and accessibility and availability of key services is a challenge. The reduction in the spread of available services and the very limited nature of rural public transport means that significant parts of the rural community can remain isolated from such services. This lack of access is often associated with the poorest members of society.

While broadband availability has improved in rural areas, the quality and cost of broadband services is still falling short of the standard required. This also acts to work against knowledge transfer and innovation. In April 2014, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources announced that the Government has committed to a major telecommunications network build-out to rural Ireland, with fibre as a cornerstone of its investment under the National Broadband Plan.

Education levels in rural areas are lower than in urban areas. In 2011, 28% of rural dwellers had a tertiary education qualification compared to 35% of urban dwellers. There are lower levels of life-long learning opportunities in rural areas, as access to such services is more difficult. Combined with the distance from markets and the cost of transporting goods to markets in the context of rising energy and fuel prices, these additional constraints to rural enterprises makes a difficult environment for innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas.

[1] National Spatial Strategy (2010) *Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook Harnessing Potential, Delivering Competitiveness, Achieving Sustainability*

4.1.4. Opportunities identified in the programming area

A wide range of issues were identified as being current opportunities. These are summarised and grouped together under various sub-headings below.

The general policy context

Notwithstanding the current economic difficulties there are many opportunities for agriculture and rural development. The FAO reports that globally there is an increasing demand for food due to worldwide population growth and increased demand for meat and dairy, major components of the Irish agri-food sector, as dietary patterns change in emerging economies. This presents the opportunity for a strong export

performance.

Forthcoming EU wide policy changes such as the removal of milk quotas in 2015 will provide an opportunity for expansion and for innovation in the dairy sector. This will reinvigorate the sector and restore a new dynamism for growth. For example, while dairy production has stagnated in Ireland since milk quotas were introduced in 1984, New Zealand underwent a large expansion with a deregulated agricultural market in dairy. Prior to 1984 both countries had expanded at a similar rate and both countries use a relatively extensive grass based dairy production system. The effective growth rate of New Zealand dairy production has been consistently around 5% per annum. Irish dairy production has the potential for expansion primarily because of the relatively competitive position of Irish dairy production relative to competitor countries. For example, the 110 cow Irish dairy farm has amongst the lowest cash cost base of any country (Teagasc, Thorne et al. 2011).

Research, Education and Training

The current enhanced image of the agri-food sector, as shown by the current high demand for third level agriculture courses, should help to attract young people and there is scope to harness the enthusiasm of young new entrants to farming and their innovation potential.

Current and future research, and the adaptation of it, can play an important part in, inter alia, maximising nutrient efficiencies, reducing emissions, informing adaptation and mitigating impacts of climate change. The EIP on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability will encourage the alignment of research to the needs of end-users. Ireland's small size, allied to its tradition of cooperation and the networks already in place augurs well for the creation of operational groups around the Bioeconomy and related issues.

There is an opportunity to better target and integrate training to identified needs and to tailor training of farmers in the delivery of environmental and public goods. Some examples might include the targeting of advice towards farmers in priority areas such as high status sites, fresh water pearl mussel catchments, Natura 2000 areas, HNV and holdings with specific derogations. It may also be possible to enhance animal welfare standards through promoting animal welfare in training courses, the use of advisory services and targeted support to assist in meeting standards. Further training opportunities existing in areas such as business skills, innovation, climate change, and collaboration.

The Teagasc food research and technology transfer programme is a mechanism for transferring innovative ideas to companies, SMEs and farmers. For example new technologies might be harnessed for food chain and risk management issues (e.g. tracking, data handling, logistics and waste reduction). At farm level the ongoing Teagasc monitor farm initiative offers potential for greater adoption of new practices/technology.

Addressing the Structural Challenges

Policy instruments (e.g. taxation policy or tailored support schemes) can be utilised to encourage generational renewal and the encouragement of restructuring or farm risk management could be incorporated in broad policy measures.

The development of the farm partnership model offers potential to increase the numbers involved across all enterprises in collaborative initiatives. Partnerships and collaborative mechanisms can also be a risk management tool.

Discussion groups have been set up in various sectors and offer potential for improvements in efficiency, profitability and adoption of new technology. There is potential to increase the numbers participating in these discussion groups. Around 5,000 dairy farmers are currently engaged in discussion groups. However this is less than one third of the more than 15,000 specialist dairy farms in the country. There may be opportunities to develop and build on this model by widening the scope of groups to incorporate environmental aspects and renewable energy issues and by including a more output based focus.

Food and the Food Chain

In terms of food and the food chain there are many opportunities. The niche demand in certain areas of food could be an opportunity for SMEs in the food industry, for example in the area of organically farmed products. There is scope for the development of rural enterprises and the artisan food sectors and, at the same time, development of the market through amalgamation in the food sector. The further development of an image and brand of Irish food based on quality, environmental merit and good standards of animal husbandry and welfare is an opportunity. The possibility of promotional programmes focusing on food quality is another opportunity. Bord Bia's voluntary Origin Green Initiative together with Quality Assurance Schemes can provide an evidence base to sustain Ireland's green reputation internationally.

Building on Ireland's Green Reputation

Despite Ireland's green reputation there are opportunities for improvement. There is also an opportunity to capitalise on low GHG emissions and the level of carbon efficiency. With farmers investing in expansion there are clear opportunities to encourage investment in technologies that have improved energy and water efficiency, or to encourage the use of renewable sources of energy wherever possible. Increased carbon efficiency of animal production systems should be possible through improved breeding/genetic improvements in livestock, feeding and other management practices. There is the potential to support the uptake of low emission slurry application technologies (e.g. trailing shoe) to contribute to ammonia and climate targets, and to manage and use waste streams such as animal waste, brown bin waste, sewage sludge etc. for energy production. Larger scale investment projects under a co-operation measure (for example village/community projects that could provide combined heat and power) might be an opportunity to explore, provided that it is found to be cost effective. Generally speaking there are opportunities to better

link up the supply and demand of bioenergy.

The greening of CAP in Pillar 1 provides the opportunity for enhanced and targeted environmental measures in Pillar 2. For example measures to protect common farmland habitats and create new habitats under an agri-environment scheme might be explored. The crop diversification element of greening may represent an opportunity for increasing habitat diversity and reducing the threat to farmland birds. Supporting farmers in addressing land abandonment and viability issues in Areas of Natural Constraint (formerly LFAs) represents a further opportunity in addition to the protection and restoration of priority habitats/species within and outside Natura 2000 sites that are under varying degrees of threat. There may also be the potential to encourage the more sustainable management of upland habitats and areas through specifically targeted uplands actions within an overall agri-environment scheme.

Increasing forest cover represents an opportunity to restore, preserve and enhance biodiversity including in Natura 2000 areas. As required under the Habitats Directive, in relation to SACs and SPAs, all applications for forestry approvals / licences and grant aid are subjected to screening, and where required, appropriate assessment, to ensure no possibility of a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

The incorporation of innovative and best practices in particular sectors can also work to deliver environmental and climate change benefits. For example, the adoption of genomic technology in the beef could underpin efficiency gains which contribute to decreased carbon emissions per unit of output and deliver a range of direct benefits to the farmer.

The Efficient Use of Resources

Agricultural input energy costs have increased by more than 50% between 2005 and 2012. These rising energy costs provide a major challenge but also an opportunity for increasing the efficiency of energy use on farms, e.g. through farm energy plans. In terms of wind energy there is significant potential for income generation for farmers from the location of wind turbines on their land.

The proposed introduction of water charges and meters in 2014/2015 in accordance with the Water Framework Directive is an opportunity to incentivise the efficient use of water both within agriculture and more generally. In terms of water quality the results of Agricultural Mini-Catchment programme are expected to deliver information on farm measures which improve water quality. More generally there is an opportunity to develop in-stream measures to alleviate flooding, reduce soil erosion, improve aquatic quality and combat invasive species (for example riparian planting).

A suite of targeted measures, perhaps in conjunction with ICT developments, might be developed in order to improve fertiliser/manure efficiency which would contribute to protecting water quality and climate action. New fertiliser additives/inhibitors and the increased use of clover offers the possibility to significantly reduce nitrogen fertiliser usage. There may be a possibility to introduce farm nitrogen budgets to improve

the efficiency of its use and reduce losses of nitrate and ammonia.

Although Irish soils are considered to have a generally good overall fertility status, Teagasc soil surveys show that there is considerable room for improvement in terms of maximising nutrient use efficiency, especially regarding inputs of lime, Phosphorus and Potassium. Teagasc soil analysis shows that approximately 60% of samples were below the optimum pH levels and over 40% of samples did not meet the target index for phosphorus or potassium.

The demand for biomass for energy is increasing. The average annual growth rate of residential biomass energy use was 18% between 2005 and 2010. Although industrial use of biomass for energy declined between 2006 and 2011, there is an opportunity for increased use of biomass for domestic purposes, for example through the further development of the wood chip/pellets market.

In terms of encouraging the fostering of carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry there are many opportunities. Carbon stores in old species rich grasslands can be protected from degradation and enhancement of hedges/trees/field margins can improve their carbon storage. In Ireland, peatlands can be a significant carbon store, so the development of a measure within an agri environment scheme to protect blanket bog and upland commonage is a possibility in order to conserve this store.

Community Based Rural Development

The OECD define local development as “*a cross cutting and integrated activity where the physical development of a place is linked to the public service inputs, place management, and wider drivers of changes such as employment, skills, investment enterprise innovation productivity and quality of life*”[1] Government proposals to align the work of Local Government and local development will support local development and ensure a more integrated approach to both the planning and implementation of development interventions at local level. Rural development is part of this process and the delivery of rural development interventions will benefit from a more streamlined and integrated approach to local development at a local level.

A community led approach will be a critical component of this reformed system to support local development. The system will rely heavily on the experience of the CLLD/LEADER approach, as it has been delivering successful rural development interventions in Ireland since the early 1990s, and will facilitate full and active participation of local communities in their development choices. However, what the system will also do is ensure that all interventions are planned in a way that will contribute to addressing the needs identified at national, regional and local level in a more comprehensive and practical way. All planning processes will be participative and will facilitate a greater understanding at local level of the need to address local needs while simultaneously considering regional and national priorities. Ireland would consider this a significant opportunity to support the future economic development of local areas and in

particular rural areas supported through the EAFRD.

In general, as part of this more integrated approach to local development, there are a variety of specific opportunities that will form part of the planning processes to address rural needs including: the use of established social capital to facilitate more sustainable development and enterprise development, the use of community-based enterprise development to increase jobs, and the use of ICT and other innovative technology-based mechanisms to deliver and support the delivery of services in rural areas (thereby reducing barriers to access to services). The renewable energy sector and the development of eco-tourism and integrated activity-based tourism as an economic driver in rural areas are further opportunities for rural areas. Networks and targeted training might be better utilised in order to make information available in these areas.

[1] Delivering Local Development: Ireland, OECD, LEED, Forthcoming.

4.1.5. Threats identified in the programming area

A wide range of issues were identified as being current threats. These are summarised and grouped together under various sub-headings below.

Economic, Social and Demographic Issues

Some overarching threats include the continued fallout from the global credit crisis and the potential for problems in recovery in the international and EU economy in the short term. This would impact severely upon the export reliant agriculture sector, as well as on rural areas through falling demand and associated knock on effects. Instability in the euro currency, wider currency fluctuations and the associated risk to Irish agri-food exports are also real threats to agriculture and the broader rural economy. The dependence on traditional markets and outlets for produce within agriculture and the fact that farmers are reluctant to avail of diversification supports are further potential threats to future income stability.

The continuation of the high level of unemployment poses a threat to both rural and urban economies. In the second quarter of 2013, although the unemployment rate had fallen slightly, it was still 13.7%. A particularly concerning trend is the increase in the long term unemployment rate, characterised as those being unemployed for 12 months or more. 58% of those currently unemployed are characterised as being long term unemployed. The European Commission have noted that, for some individuals, the experience of long term unemployment can lead to permanent alienation from the labour market, with subsequent risks of material deprivation, poverty and social exclusion.

As well as the pressure on the overall EU budget, the continued commitment to funding rural development is highly dependent on limited national exchequer funding, for which there is considerable competition in the short and medium term.

Reduced national financial resources and cutbacks in research, training and education budgets due to budgetary constraints may result in lower skills levels and the sub-optimal transfer of technology to farmers. The ageing farm population also represents a threat. The cultural and traditional ties to land ownership and resistance within farming to inter-generational transfer that continue to work against early transfer to young farmers have been noted already. Young people may move to other careers and areas if opportunities are not available in farming and rural areas.

Rural population decreased from 39% of Ireland's total population in 2006 to 38% in 2011. Rural depopulation, in particular young people emigrating from rural areas, results in the loss of innovation potential. The ageing of the rural population increases poverty and exclusion and loss of enterprise development potential. Dependency ratios are lowest in urban areas. The continued reduction in service provision in rural areas, in particular in the context of increased transport and fuels costs could lead to a negative cycle of service loss and population loss and further pressure to leave those areas.

There is continued high unemployment, and particularly long term unemployment, in rural areas. There is potential for increased rural poverty as a consequence. The risk of poverty in rural areas (18.8%) is higher than in urban areas (14.2%) as shown by the CSO, 2011 Survey on Income and Living Conditions.

On a related issue, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report on Entrepreneurship in Ireland in 2011 noted that the negative change in the environment identified in its earlier reports continued to have an impact on the perception of entrepreneurship as an attractive career option. Only 26% of the respondents to a survey saw real opportunities for the development of new business. The prevalence of those aspiring to be an entrepreneur in Ireland in the future was very low in 2011, only 8.5%. This is a significant change to previously relatively high levels and places Ireland behind the average across the OECD and EU.

A higher proportion of individuals living in urban areas received non-formal education (22% vs. 15%) and lifelong learning (27% vs. 17%) when compared to rural areas. This raises the threat of the rural population failing to participate in the life-long learning and up-skilling required by the modern knowledge economy.

There is evidence of a high level of work related accidents on farms. The Health and Safety Authority have noted that over half of workplace deaths in 2010 occurred on farms and the fatality rate of accidents in agriculture is higher than for other sectors.

Competitiveness and Viability Threats

Rising input costs are a threat to competitiveness and viability in agriculture. Furthermore commodity price volatility within agriculture globally remains a threat. For example Ireland is more than 800% self sufficient in beef production and so is very susceptible to fluctuations and trends in international markets. Price volatility may discourage entry of young entrants (although it should encourage diversification). There is a high dependence on imported feed and fertilisers and increased volatility in these input prices. Rising energy and fuel costs also affect the cost of transport for food and agri-business.

Food safety scares (both Irish and international) have shown the inter-connectedness and complexity of the food supply chain in recent times. Animal and plant diseases (e.g. most recently *Chalara fraxinea* in Ash trees) and invasive species can spread quickly within and between countries. Reputational damage from any adverse scares could be serious and potentially long lasting.

Environmental Threats

Generally speaking as farms get more intensive and specialised there is a risk that this production is gained at the expense of the environment and may have negative environmental impacts. For example, Food Harvest 2020 targets could possibly result in intensification on marginal land in some areas. The potential skills and awareness shortage in relation to the environment and ecology in the farming and agricultural professional sector is a threat to the sector's green reputation. Enhancing the skills of knowledge transfer providers through CPD will enhance their ability to deliver appropriate courses, thereby facilitating the transfer of the appropriate mix of skills required at farm level.

Generally the temperate Irish climate is one of the sector's strengths, especially for grass based beef and dairy production which is less susceptible to drought than crops such as potatoes. However, the likely effects of climate change on Irish agriculture are a threat in future. In the longer term water availability may become more limited in parts of the country. Crops such as potatoes and cereals in the eastern part of the country are likely to be most at risk from summer droughts according to the European Centre for Climate Adaptation report for Ireland. Although the threat will initially be to crops from droughts due to climate change, it could potentially affect grass too, depending on severity of climate change. There is also the potential for greater risks of flooding in the West due to changed rainfall patterns. In general, there are also threats associated with extreme weather including more unreliable weather patterns. For example, recent years have seen heavy snowfall and flooding, and in 2013 there was a major fodder crisis due to unseasonable conditions. Unreliable weather patterns and their effects on agriculture are a cause for concern and a potential threat to the sector.

However, in general, Ireland's geographic position means that it has not suffered natural disasters of the severity and scale witnessed elsewhere. For example, it does not usually suffer from the extremes of temperature experienced by many other countries at similar latitude because of the predominant influence of the Atlantic Ocean on the country's climate.

Nationally and internationally there are pressures to further reduce GHG emissions from the agriculture sector. Under the EU Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) binding emission reduction targets have been

established for Member States to cover the period 2013–2020 for non-Emissions Trading Sectors including agriculture. It requires a 20% reduction in GHG emissions in Ireland by 2020 compared to its 2005 levels. In the absence of abatement measures, GHG emissions from agriculture are projected to increase by 7% between 2010 and 2020; equivalent to a 1% increase above the 2005 ESD reference year.

Approximately 20% of Ireland is categorised as peatland including raised bogs, blanket bogs, and fens. If intact, this is a good carbon store. However the EPA has noted that this peatland is threatened by domestic and industrial extraction, afforestation, wind farms and drainage for agricultural and other uses. Another threat is that Ireland would fail to meet its targets under the Gothenburg Protocol which sets emission ceilings for four pollutants: sulphur, NOx, VOCs and ammonia. Similar to GHG emissions, ammonia emissions from agriculture are also projected to increase.

Targets have been set under the EU Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC that the EU will reach a 20% share of energy from renewable sources by 2020. Ireland's target is 16% but for 2011 this figure was only 6.5%. Failure to meet these targets is a major threat. Biomass production at farm level is at risk of lacking the necessary scale to be competitive or big enough to assure customers that continuity of supply is safe and this cycle could potentially re-enforce itself.

Ireland's Prioritised Action Framework identifies key priorities for managing the Natura 2000 network, to achieve the objectives of the EU and National Biodiversity Strategies. It identifies threats to various endangered species associated with farmland including the freshwater pearl mussel, chough, hen harrier, geese and swans, twite, corncrake, grey partridge and breeding waders.

Land abandonment (potentially due to a combination of low productivity and the aging profile of farmers) is a threat to biodiversity, as it can reduce the habitat value for certain species. It could also lead to the encroachment of scrub. The threat of the abandonment of marginal land and of areas facing various constraints can be mitigated through support under the Areas of Natural Constraints scheme, which can have benefits (both from the point of view of economic viability as referenced already) but also importantly from an environmental point of view in terms of encouraging the continued farming in an environmentally sustainable manner of more marginal land in particular. This is an issue which was raised consistently during the consultation phases of RDP design.

4.1.6. Common Context Indicators

I Socio-economic and rural situation			
1 Population			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	4,582,769	Inhabitants	2012 p
rural	72.4	% of total	2012 p
intermediate	NA	% of total	
urban	27.6	% of total	2012 p
2 Age Structure			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total < 15 years	21.6	% of total population	2012 p
total 15 - 64 years	66.5	% of total population	2012 p
total > 64 years	11.9	% of total population	2012 p
rural <15 years	22.3	% of total population	2012 p
rural 15 - 64 years	65.6	% of total population	2012 p
rural > 64 years	12.1	% of total population	2012 p
3 Territory			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	69,798	Km2	2012
rural	98.7	% of total area	2012
intermediate	NA	% of total area	
urban	1.3	% of total area	2012
4 Population Density			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	66.9	Inhab / km2	2011
rural	49.1	Inhab / km2	2011
5 Employment Rate			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total (15-64 years)	58.8	%	2012
male (15-64 years)	62.7	%	2012
female (15-64 years)	55.1	%	2012
* rural (thinly populated) (15-64 years)	57.6	%	2012
total (20-64 years)	63.7	%	2012
male (20-64 years)	68.1	%	2012
female (20-64 years)	59.4	%	2012
6 Self-employment rate			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total (15-64 years)	14.5	%	2012
7 Unemployment rate			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total (15-74 years)	14.7	%	2012
youth (15-24 years)	30.4	%	2012
rural (thinly populated) (15-74 years)	15.6	%	2012
youth (15-24 years)	33.9	%	2012
8 GDP per capita			

Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	129	Index PPS (EU-27 = 100)	2012
* rural	103	Index PPS (EU-27 = 100)	2010
9 Poverty rate			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	29.4	% of total population	2010
* rural (thinly populated)	28.8	% of total population	2010
10 Structure of the economy (GVA)			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	148,529	EUR million	2012 e
primary	2.2	% of total	2012 e
secondary	27.4	% of total	2012 e
tertiary	70.4	% of total	2012 e
rural	57.8	% of total	2010
intermediate	NA	% of total	
urban	42.2	% of total	2010
11 Structure of Employment			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	1,838.5	1000 persons	2012
primary	4.7	% of total	2012
secondary	18.4	% of total	2012
tertiary	76.9	% of total	2012
rural	66.3	% of total	2010
intermediate	NA	% of total	
urban	33.7	% of total	2010
12 Labour productivity by economic sector			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	80,788.1	EUR/person	2012 e
primary	38,358.6	EUR/person	2012 e
secondary	120,408.2	EUR/person	2012 e
tertiary	73,894.7	EUR/person	2012 e
rural	66,766.7	EUR/person	2010
intermediate	NA	EUR/person	
urban	95,983.6	EUR/person	2010

II Agriculture/Sectorial analysis			
13 Employment by economic activity			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	1,837.8	1000 persons	2012
agriculture	81.2	1000 persons	2012
agriculture	4.4	% of total	2012
forestry	2.6	1000 persons	2012
forestry	0.1	% of total	2012
food industry	45.2	1000 persons	2012
food industry	2.5	% of total	2012
tourism	119.7	1000 persons	2012
tourism	6.5	% of total	2012
14 Labour productivity in agriculture			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	9,799.9	EUR/AWU	2010 - 2012
15 Labour productivity in forestry			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	NA	EUR/AWU	
16 Labour productivity in the food industry			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	153,620.7	EUR/person	2010
17 Agricultural holdings (farms)			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	139,890	No	2010
farm size <2 Ha	2,340	No	2010
farm size 2-4.9 Ha	7,380	No	2010
farm size 5-9.9 Ha	15,750	No	2010
farm size 10-19.9 Ha	33,580	No	2010
farm size 20-29.9 Ha	24,690	No	2010
farm size 30-49.9 Ha	30,670	No	2010
farm size 50-99.9 Ha	20,760	No	2010
farm size >100 Ha	4,720	No	2010
farm economic size <2000 Standard Output (SO)	17,920	No	2010
farm economic size 2.000 - 3.999 SO	16,810	No	2010
farm economic size 4.000 - 7.999 SO	25,150	No	2010
farm economic size 8.000 - 14.999 SO	26,030	No	2010
farm economic size 15.000 - 24.999 SO	17,570	No	2010
farm economic size 25.000 - 49.999 SO	15,160	No	2010
farm economic size 50.000 - 99.999 SO	11,160	No	2010
farm economic size 100.000 - 249.999 SO	8,660	No	2010
farm economic size 250.000 - 499.999 SO	1,040	No	2010
farm economic size > 500.000 SO	400	No	2010
average physical size	35.7	ha UAA/holding	2010
average economic size	30,722.11	EUR of SO/holding	2010
average size in labour units (persons)	1.9	Persons/holding	2010
average size in labour units (AWU)	1.2	AWU/holding	2010

18 Agricultural Area			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total UAA	4,991,350	ha	2010
arable	20.3	% of total UAA	2010
permanent grassland and meadows	79.7	% of total UAA	2010
permanent crops	0	% of total UAA	2010
19 Agricultural area under organic Farming			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
certified	24,850	ha UAA	2010
in conversion	6,780	ha UAA	2010
share of UAA (both certified and conversion)	0.6	% of total UAA	2010
20 Irrigated Land			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	0	ha	2010
share of UAA	0	% of total UAA	2010
21 Livestock units			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	5,787,400	LSU	2010
22 Farm labour force			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total regular farm labour force	272,040	Persons	2010
total regular farm labour force	162,350	AWU	2010
23 Age structure of farm managers			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total number of farm managers	139,890	No	2010
share of < 35 y	6.8	% of total managers	2010
ratio <35 / >= 55 y	13.4	No of young managers by 100 elderly managers	2010
24 Agricultural training of farm managers			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
share of total managers with basic and full agricultural training	31	% of total	2010
share of manager < 35 y with basic and full agricultural training	51.5	% of total	2010
25 Agricultural factor income			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	16,910.2	EUR/AWU	2012
total (index)	83.9	Index 2005 = 100	2012
26 Agricultural Entrepreneurial Income			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
Standard of living of farmers	11,717.4	EUR/AWU	2012
Standard of living of farmers as a share of the standard of living of persons employed in other sectors	26.7	%	2012
27 Total factor productivity in agriculture			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total (index)	93.2	Index 2005 = 100	2009 - 2011
28 Gross fixed capital formation in agriculture			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
GFCF	362.9	EUR million	2011
share of GVA in agriculture	12.4	% of GVA in agriculture	2011

29 Forest and other wooded land (FOWL) (000)			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	788	1000 ha	2010
share of total land area	11.5	% of total land area	2010
30 Tourism infrastructure			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
bed-places in collective establishments	197,065	No of bed-places	2011
rural	75.2	% of total	2011
intermediate	NA	% of total	
urban	24.8	% of total	2011

III Environment/climate			
31 Land Cover			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
share of agricultural land	67.1	% of total area	2006
share of natural grassland	1.3	% of total area	2006
share of forestry land	4.1	% of total area	2006
share of transitional woodland shrub	6	% of total area	2006
share of natural land	17.2	% of total area	2006
share of artificial land	2.3	% of total area	2006
share of other area	2.1	% of total area	2006
32 Areas with Natural Constraints			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	77.5	% of total UAA	2005
mountain	0	% of total UAA	2005
other	77.1	% of total UAA	2005
specific	0.4	% of total UAA	2005
33 Farming intensity			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
low intensity	47.1	% of total UAA	2007
medium intensity	32	% of total UAA	2007
high intensity	20.9	% of total UAA	2007
grazing	44.7	% of total UAA	2010
34 Natura 2000 areas			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
share of the territory	13.2	% of territory	2011
share of UAA (incl. natural grassland)	4.1	% of UAA	2011
share of total forestry area	18.3	% of forest area	2011
35 Farmland Birds index (FBI)			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total (index)	92.4	Index 2000 = 100	2008
36 Conservation status of agricultural habitats (grassland)			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
favourable	0	% of assessments of habitats	2013
unfavourable - inadequate	17	% of assessments of habitats	2013
unfavourable - bad	83	% of assessments of habitats	2013
unknown	0	% of assessments of habitats	2013
37 HNV Farming			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	22	% of total UAA	2007 e
Comment: 22% i.e. 1,117,667 hectares of HNV as % of overall UAA (Estimates based on 2007 data)			
38 Protected Forest			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
class 1.1	NA	% of FOWL area	
class 1.2	NA	% of FOWL area	

class 1.3	0.9	% of FOWL area	2011
class 2	NA	% of FOWL area	
39 Water Abstraction in Agriculture			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total	0	1000 m3	2010
40 Water Quality			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
Potential surplus of nitrogen on agricultural land	52.8	kg N/ha/year	2006 - 2009
Potential surplus of phosphorus on agricultural land	4	kg P/ha/year	2006 - 2009
Nitrates in freshwater - Surface water: High quality	74.9	% of monitoring sites	2010
Nitrates in freshwater - Surface water: Moderate quality	24	% of monitoring sites	2010
Nitrates in freshwater - Surface water: Poor quality	1.1	% of monitoring sites	2010
Nitrates in freshwater - Groundwater: High quality	85.2	% of monitoring sites	2010
Nitrates in freshwater - Groundwater: Moderate quality	14.8	% of monitoring sites	2010
Nitrates in freshwater - Groundwater: Poor quality	0	% of monitoring sites	2010
41 Soil organic matter in arable land			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
Total estimates of organic carbon content	11.5	mega tons	2009
Mean organic carbon content	21.2	g kg-1	2009
42 Soil Erosion by water			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
rate of soil loss by water erosion	0.3	tonnes/ha/year	2006
agricultural area affected	115.8	1000 ha	2006 - 2007
agricultural area affected	2.4	% of agricultural area	2006 - 2007
43 Production of renewable Energy from agriculture and forestry			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
from agriculture	34.4	kToe	2010
from forestry	197	kToe	2010
44 Energy use in agriculture, forestry and food industry			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
agriculture and forestry	251	kToe	2011
use per ha (agriculture and forestry)	47	kg of oil equivalent per ha of UAA	2011
food industry	474	kToe	2011
45 GHG emissions from agriculture			
Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
total agriculture (CH4 and N2O and soil emissions/removals)	18,370.6	1000 t of CO2 equivalent	2010
share of total GHG Emissions	30.5	% of total net emissions	2010

4.1.7. Programme-Specific Context Indicators

Sector	Code	Indicator name	Value	Unit	Year
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI4	Rural Population Density	55	Persons per Km2	2011
<p>Comment: <i>Combining the rural population of 3,762,043 persons and the rural territory of 68,194.1 km2 gives a rural population density of 55 persons per square km.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI2.3	Rural Age Structure (>64 years)	9.38	% of total population	2011
<p>Comment: <i>430,312 is the rural population over 64 years of age. This is 9.38% of the overall national population.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI2.1	Rural Age Structure (<15 years)	18.53	% of total population	2011
<p>Comment: <i>850,084 is the rural population under 15 years of age. This is 18.53% of the overall national population.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI5	Rural Employment Rate	50.49	% Employment rate	2011
<p>Comment: <i>The number of rural persons over 15 is 2,911,959 and the number of rural persons over 15 employed is 1,470,113 which equates to a rural employment rate of 50.49%.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI2.2	Rural Age Structure (15-64 years)	54.09	% of total population	2011
<p>Comment: <i>2,481,647 is the rural population between 15 & 64 years of age. This is 54.09% of the overall national population.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI3	Rural Territory	99.6	% of total area	2011
<p>Comment: <i>The rural territory is 68,194.1 km2 which is 99.6% of the overall State territory of 68,466 km2.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					
I Socio-economic and rural situation	PSCI1	Rural Population	3762043	persons	2011
<p>Comment: <i>This is 82% of the total population of 4,588,252. The remainder is considered urban i.e. the population of the five largest cities in line with the definition adopted in the 2014-2020 RDP.</i></p> <p><i>CSO Census 2011</i></p>					

4.2. Needs assessment

Title (or reference) of the need	P1			P2		P3		P4			P5					P6			Cross cutting objectives		
	1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	3A	3B	4A	4B	4C	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	6A	6B	6C	Environment	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	Innovation
a - Effective Mechanism and Structure for Transferring and Sharing of Knowledge Amongst Farmers	X		X	X			X	X	X	X				X					X	X	X
b - Effective Mechanisms for identifying appropriate applications of research knowledge		X		X									X						X	X	X
c - Targeted Training and/or Advisory Services with particular focus on Agri Environment and Animal Health			X				X	X	X				X						X	X	X
d - Support for farmers in ANCs to increase farming viability, competitiveness and address key environmental challenges				X				X											X		
e - Targeted on Farm Investments				X	X		X	X				X	X						X	X	X
f - Targeted Investment Support to Young Farmers Entering into Agriculture				X	X		X	X				X	X						X	X	X
g - Sectoral support to increase competitiveness and efficiency				X		X											X				X
h - Increase awareness of risk management and price volatility							X														
i - A well targeted and designed Agri Environment Scheme			X					X	X	X			X	X					X	X	
j - Protection of high status waters, improvement of water quality and appropriate usage of fertiliser			X					X	X	X									X	X	
k - Improved nutrient management planning and appropriate grazing levels amongst farmers			X					X	X	X									X	X	
l - Better water usage in agriculture								X		X									X	X	

m - Promote the efficiency of energy use in agriculture				X															X			
n - Increase the supply of bioenergy and where possible facilitation of the bioenergy supply chain				X									X					X		X		
o Improved livestock breeding & production systems & targeted Agri-Environment Climate action to reduce GHG & ammonia emissions	X		X											X					X	X	X	
p - Protection of existing carbon stores, improvement of carbon sequestration combined with effective measurement														X						X		
q To contribute to a coordinated approach to the delivery of support for enterprise development and job creation in rural areas				X		X							X			X	X	X		X	X	X
r - To ensure effective and coordinated use of all available rural resources to support local development in rural areas						X							X			X	X	X		X	X	X
s Support & enhance communications initiatives to improve broadband & ICT infrastructure with a particular focus on rural areas	X		X													X	X	X				X

4.2.1. a - Effective Mechanism and Structure for Transferring and Sharing of Knowledge Amongst Farmers

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas
- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management
- 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

The need for support to increase and develop knowledge transfer to farmers was a strong theme in the public consultation, and was also identified as both a weakness and as an opportunity during the work on the SWOT analysis. This need has been identified in a broad range of farming sectors, for example in the beef, dairy, sheep, pigs, equine and tillage sectors. Developing the knowledge base can clearly take place through many different forms. However one approach, which was consistently referenced in the preparatory work for the RDP, was the use of knowledge transfer groups. Although some discussion groups exist already, a possible approach here would be to target increased participation levels while simultaneously developing the model to ensure a more strategic, integrated and output focused approach. In effect, this would not represent a continuation of existing discussion groups but rather a deepening and widening of the approach to date to contribute to expanding the knowledge base and foster the adoption of best practices and new technologies at farm level. The model represents an opportunity to address identified knowledge deficits across a range of strategically important areas identified as part of the SWOT and consultation process, including financial management, animal health, environmental and climate change actions and grass management.

4.2.2. b - Effective Mechanisms for identifying appropriate applications of research knowledge

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1B) Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance
- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

A clear challenge has been identified in addressing the difficulties in technology transfer and the translation of research outputs to end users. Greater linkages between research and on farm implementation need to be established and this theme emerged during the public consultation process and also during the work on the SWOT analysis. Support under the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) has been highlighted as a possible vehicle to address this, particularly given the overarching framework of the EIP on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability. There may be existing examples to learn from, even if they are not formal EIPs. For example, the BETTER farm programme was considered to be a strength in the SWOT analysis. As well as researchers, the beef industry and farming interests are also involved in this programme. EIP operational groups could be utilised to strengthen the role of research and innovation throughout the sector in a number of identified strategic areas.

4.2.3. c - Targeted Training and/or Advisory Services with particular focus on Agri Environment and Animal Health

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

The importance of ongoing support for training (especially in the delivery of environmental and public goods) was a further theme emerging from the SWOT and consultation processes. In particular, focused training in relation to agri-environment actions has been linked to reductions in the error rates in agri-environment schemes. The delivery mechanism for agri-environment training has been considered carefully, and it is recognised that formal classroom style training sessions may not be the most appropriate for farmers in relation to agri-environment schemes. It may be necessary to combine on farm visits with targeted online presentations for farmers in relation to agri-environment education and training. Such training could be delivered as an integrated core requirement associated with participation in an agri-environment scheme.

Possible needs for more bespoke training in a wide range of areas were also identified as part of the RDP design process. The need for a prioritised focus on training that can be delivered means that dedicated funding cannot be linked to every area identified. However, in designing a suite of knowledge transfer measures, the possibility of including some of the issues arising as modules should be explored.

One area which emerged as a particular area requiring a targeted training intervention and where there is a clearly established economic benefit for intervention is animal health and welfare. While Ireland's status in relation to animal disease was identified in the SWOT as a strength, it was also recognised that failure to maintain control of animal disease levels would have serious impacts on the agri-food sector. It is important that attempts are made to try and reduce the risks in this area. In particular, targeted and prioritised advisory services for farmers in relation to specific animal disease areas such as somatic cell count reduction and Johnes disease and Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) emerged as a priority for investment.

Finally, the beneficial role that continuing professional development for agricultural advisors plays in areas such as environment and climate change actions was a recurring theme in the design phase of the new RDP. Up-skilling of advisors was seen as a measure which could complement and support other areas of intervention and ensure the achievement of greater value for money.

4.2.4. d - Support for farmers in ANCs to increase farming viability, competitiveness and address key environmental challenges

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment

Description

The Less Favoured Areas scheme under the 2007 – 2013 RDP, which itself built upon the success of the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme under the 2000-2006 RDP, was very efficient in terms of its operation, particularly given its close linkages to the Pillar 1 Single Farm Payment Scheme. There remains a clear need to continue support for farmers in Less Favoured Areas (Areas of Natural Constraints) in order to simultaneously increase farming viability and competitiveness and also to assist in addressing key environmental challenges, such as supporting biodiversity, maintenance of landscapes, and avoiding land abandonment.

Over the course of the 2007 -2013 Rural Development Programme, the Less Favoured Areas scheme contributed significantly towards Family Farm Incomes and the economic viability of holdings, particularly along the Western seaboard and in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region. The various stages of the public and stakeholder consultation process consistently also showed major support for the scheme from a variety of different stakeholders.

Importantly, the scheme is also often closely associated with environmental and social benefits. For example, the LFA scheme has been seen to make an important contribution towards achieving environmental goals by supporting the continuation of farming in accordance with environmental standards in areas facing particular constraints. This in turn delivers a range of benefits in areas such as the maintenance of habitats for biodiversity and also the preservation of landscapes and the delivery of associated public good benefits.

The importance of the various challenges addressed by support for ANCs is evidence by their clear referencing within the wording of Focus Areas 4A.

4.2.5. e - Targeted on Farm Investments

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 2B) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal
- 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 5B) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

The SWOT analysis and public consultation identified a need for capital investment over a wide range of areas, in order to, inter alia, target support at key sectors to enable growth and expansion, contribute to environmental and climate change objectives, support increased efficiency of holdings, and improve animal health and welfare.

A range of possible areas for investment emerged from the SWOT, including both productive and non-productive investments. NFS data show that average gross new investment per farm in 2012 was €8,713. However, the need for certain investments that have been identified by stakeholders and through the SWOT process, in particular rainwater harvesting and anaerobic digestion, must be considered against the backdrop of very low demand for certain previous schemes of this type.

A crucial area identified for targeted on farm investments is the dairy industry, which is expected to expand significantly in the post quota era; milking and storage and cooling equipment emerged from the needs assessment process as a high priority as support to planned expansion. Another key area identified is the need for enhanced storage of farm organic nutrients such as soiled water facilities, soiled manure storage on poultry farms and potentially slurry storage. Other possible priority areas identified include support for the uptake of low emissions spreading technology and support for certain types of animal welfare, handling and safety equipment.

The double dividend of increasing productivity while at the same time supporting actions to assist in the mitigation of the impacts of climate change is fundamental to the achievement of Food Harvest 2020 commitments. Therefore, energy intensive farming sectors were identified as areas where investment might also be targeted.

Proposed investment in on farm capital investment also emerged as a possible avenue for addressing certain structural challenges in the sector – namely the age profile of Irish farmers – given that the Rural Development Regulation allows for greater aid intensity to be directed at young trained farmers under on farm capital investments.

4.2.6. f - Targeted Investment Support to Young Farmers Entering into Agriculture

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 2B) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal
- 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 5B) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

An effective ladder of opportunity for trained young people to enter into and progress in farming and which will result in an improved age profile of farmers is a clear challenge for the sector. This has been clearly demonstrated in the public consultation process and in the SWOT analysis, and the availability of land through inter generational farm transfer is crucial to this need. However, broader cultural and socio-economic issues such as the long-standing Irish historical attitudes towards land ownership are central here and these are beyond the scope of the RDP.

It is important to note, however, that support to the agri-food sector is delivered across both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy. In relation to Pillar 1 there are several innovative features of the new Common Agricultural Policy, including support for young farmers. This is incorporated in two elements of the new Direct Payment Regulation, namely the Young Farmers Scheme and the National Reserve. The essential purpose of the Young Farmers Scheme and the National Reserve is to assist young farmers in the initial stages of establishing a farming enterprise in their own name and to encourage generational renewal. As a complement to these measures, it is also an option to support young farmers under Pillar 2 via increased aid intensity under Article 17 and support for increased uptake of new and existing farm collaboration mechanisms could offer a further approach to this issue. This integrated approach is seen as a more effective approach to the identified need to support young farmers than a stand alone scheme of support for start up costs for young farmers.

4.2.7. g - Sectoral support to increase competitiveness and efficiency

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and

modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification

- 3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations
- 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas

Cross cutting objectives

- Innovation

Description

The need to support artisan food, organic food products and direct selling of farm products was evident in the stakeholder consultation and the SWOT analysis. In addition, the Food Harvest 2020 strategy recommended broadening opportunities, including local markets, for the purchase of local food. Increased co-operation is important in terms of the integration of producers into the supply chain. The use of quality schemes and the organisation of Producer Groups are possible approaches to enhancing the producers' position in the market. However, in order to ensure that food quality and safety concerns are not affected through small scale production and direct selling, there is a need to continuously improve and validate production quality.

The beef sector is a major component of the agri-food sector in Ireland, and the SWOT and consultation processes highlighted a number of challenges for that sector. It is essential that the reputation and competitiveness of the beef sector is maintained and enhanced in future, with forecasts in increasing global demand and increasing low cost global competition. At the same time beef farmers are amongst the most vulnerable in the farming sector in terms of their lower farm incomes and their higher dependence on direct payments in relation to farm incomes and output. This was shown in the SWOT analysis and the need for enhanced viability and competitiveness was also a theme in the Food Harvest 2020 strategy. Therefore support to this sector is needed, for example through assisting in production at the higher end of the value chain and continuing to support the distinctiveness of Irish beef.

Any sectoral supports should also be undertaken in a manner compatible with possible schemes under Pillar 1.

4.2.8. h - Increase awareness of risk management and price volatility

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management

Cross cutting objectives

Description

The findings of the public consultation and the SWOT analysis confirmed that Ireland is not generally prone to suffering from natural disasters, due to its geographic position. For example, it does not usually suffer from the extremes of temperature experienced by many other countries at similar latitude because of the predominant influence of the North Atlantic Gulf Stream on the country's climate. Nonetheless, in compliance with EU requirements for member states to develop an integrated approach to the prevention and management of both natural and man-made disasters, the Office of Emergency Planning, published a national risk assessment for Ireland in 2012. However, pre-existing nationally funded measures are considered to be sufficient to address these possibilities.

While a need has been identified for support for risk management particularly in the case of animal plant and pest disease, there was divided opinion amongst stakeholders on the extent of this need in terms of support under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. Animal diseases might best be addressed through knowledge transfer and advisory services as referred to previously. In terms of risk management in general it is believed that this could also be addressed via knowledge transfer mechanisms.

4.2.9. i - A well targeted and designed Agri Environment Scheme

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture
- 5E) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

The outcome from the public consultation and the SWOT analysis demonstrated a clear need for an effective agri-environment-climate measure with emphasis on general agri-environment challenges as well as more specific biodiversity issues. Well-designed, targeted, monitored and managed measures will contribute to meeting Ireland's objectives under various directives, strategies etc., such as: the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, EU Habitats and Birds Directives and Water Framework Directives.

As referred to in the SWOT analysis, although significant progress has been made in the past decade, biodiversity loss has not been halted in Ireland. An agri environment-climate scheme is a crucial mechanism to help preserve and restore biodiversity. The need to implement support for overcoming the constraints relevant to farmers in designated Natura 2000 sites and for the protection of habitats and species were recurring themes in the SWOT and consultation processes. One possible approach identified was a tiered agri-environment scheme addressing general environmental needs at a basic level and more targeted environmental needs at a higher level dealing with particular needs such as uplands conservation for commonages, conservation of selected endangered bird species and farmland habitat conservation. There was clear support emerging for any such scheme to take cognisance of, for example, Irelands Prioritised Action Framework for Funding Natura 2000.

Other themes evident in the SWOT and public consultation included the importance of approved agricultural planners, actions targeted at specific areas (as opposed to a whole farm approach), the need for record keeping of actions undertaken and the role of dedicated training in environmental practices and standards.

4.2.10. j - Protection of high status waters, improvement of water quality and appropriate usage of fertiliser

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

The results of the stakeholder consultation pointed to a need to address water quality issues, particularly in the context of agri-environment climate measures. Relevant issues here included the protection of high status waters, the improvement of water quality in particularly sensitive areas, and riparian planting/management which can help to alleviate flooding and to protect water quality. In this context, buffer zones along water courses and fencing of water courses were highlighted as possible priority actions under an agri-environment climate measures.

Reliance on imported fertilisers and their volatile prices as an agricultural input was found to be a threat

under the SWOT analysis and improved fertiliser usage efficiency was noted as an opportunity that might be exploited. Appropriate fertiliser levels were also identified as an important issue, particularly given the strong green reputation of Irish agriculture and the need to maintain and enhance this where possible.

4.2.11. k - Improved nutrient management planning and appropriate grazing levels amongst farmers

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes
- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

Soil management is an important element of environmental sustainability. The predominance of Ireland's grass-based farming systems minimises the risk of soil erosion, and this was found to be one of the strengths during the SWOT analysis. Actions taken to improve water quality can also have a beneficial impact upon soil erosion, as was highlighted during the stakeholder consultation process. The analysis points to the fact that preventing soil erosion and improved soil management may be best addressed through specific measures or actions within any agri-environment scheme, such as crop management and appropriate grazing levels. In the past, over-grazing on upland areas was a major environmental issue. However, changes in management practices can sometimes lead to under-grazing, thus presenting environmental difficulties, and innovative actions may be needed to encourage a more cohesive and sustainable approach requiring greater co-operation among farmers at local level.

Appropriate fertiliser levels are also important in relation to soil management overall. The possible inclusion of a nutrient management plan within an agri-environment scheme thus arose as a theme in the SWOT and consultation phase. The requirement for nutrient management plans was a feature of previous agri-environment schemes under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme. For example a nutrient management plan was required for participants under the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) but it was not required under the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS).

4.2.12. 1 - Better water usage in agriculture

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 5A) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

The SWOT analysis noted that Ireland already has low abstraction pressure on water bodies, particularly in the case of meat and dairy production which are traditionally seen as intensive water users. Low levels of irrigated and abstracted water usage in Irish agriculture were evident. Nonetheless there may be a need to increase efficiency in water use. The need for improved efficiency in water usage could also be met by investment measures under Article 17 in the Rural Development Programme. This point was noted with some frequency during the stakeholder consultation. In particular, the low uptake under the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme under the 2007-2013 RDP needs to be considered. It should also be noted that, due to costs involved in investing in rainwater harvesting, it only suits particular enterprises with especially heavy water usage such as dairy, horticulture, pigs and poultry. It is a very significant capital investment and generally is seen as a low priority investment amongst farmers. Nevertheless, the issue of water efficiency in the context of WFD requirements remains as an important policy matter and this can be addressed via on farm capital investment where appropriate, and there is scope under the on farm capital investment measure to address this.

4.2.13. m - Promote the efficiency of energy use in agriculture

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 5B) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing

Cross cutting objectives

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

Rising energy costs were noted in the SWOT analysis as a major challenge for agriculture but also as a potential opportunity for increasing the efficiency of energy use on farms. Energy efficiency within agriculture also arose as an issue during the stakeholder consultation, albeit not as an over-riding concern when compared to some other environmental and climate change objectives. Nonetheless, there is an

identified need to promote the efficiency of energy use in agriculture in certain circumstances. In particular, support might usefully focus on the more energy intensive sectors, such as the pig and poultry sectors. The evidence gathered suggested that this need could be addressed via Article 17 capital investments.

4.2.14. n - Increase the supply of bioenergy and where possible facilitation of the bioenergy supply chain

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 5C) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and other non food raw material for the purposes of the bio-economy
- 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas

Cross cutting objectives

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

The potential for supports for increased production of renewable energy under the RDP was a clear theme during the stakeholder consultation process. Renewable energy also arose as an issue during the SWOT analysis. Despite increases in recent years there are still relatively low levels of production and use overall in Ireland, as noted by the SEAI. Another weakness that was noted in this area was the problems in terms of the supply chain for bioenergy production, i.e. the need to better join up supply and demand.

Therefore, there is an identified need to facilitate the supply of renewable energy which may be enhanced by support for investment measures in renewable energy under priority 2. Renewable energy supply and demand should also be better linked and joined up and the use of co-operative or regional approaches might be facilitated. Short rotation forestry, energy crops or agro forestry can aid in the replacement of fossil fuels and energy intensive materials. In terms of bioenergy production under the 2007 - 2013 RDP, some problems have been experienced in relation to miscanthus in recent times, and it may be the case that willow in particular has a greater potential in terms of uptake. These factors must all be considered in any analysis of bioenergy schemes and renewable energy production.

4.2.15. o Improved livestock breeding & production systems & targeted Agri-Environment Climate action to reduce GHG & ammonia emissions

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas

- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

As the level of green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture in general, and from ruminants in particular, is significant in Ireland there is a clear need to reduce these emissions through improved livestock breeding and production systems, the promotion of innovative approaches and best practice, and through targeted agri-environment action. This feature of our high emissions arose in the course of the SWOT analysis in different guises. For example, the fact that over 30% of our GHG emissions arise from agriculture was found to be a weakness. Nonetheless, the opportunity is clearly there to reduce emissions further and take advantage of the positive green and sustainable Irish reputation. The climate challenge was a particular feature of the stakeholder consultation with many stakeholders clearly aware of the challenges and opportunities ahead in terms of reducing GHG and ammonia emissions. There is a clear link to the Food Harvest 2020 strategy in terms of the requirement for smart, green growth. The double dividend of increasing productivity, and at the same time supporting actions to assist in the mitigation of the impacts of climate change, is fundamental.

Some of the actions that would be required in order to meet this need could be programmed under a variety of potential RDP measures including: Article 14 (Knowledge Transfer and Information Actions), Article 17 (Investments in Physical Assets), Article 28 (Agri-Environment-Climate) and also Article 35 (Co-operation). Regardless of the way in which such possible supports are designed, the need remains clearly established.

4.2.16. p - Protection of existing carbon stores, improvement of carbon sequestration combined with effective measurement

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 5E) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry

Cross cutting objectives

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Description

There is a need to protect existing stores of carbon and to improve carbon sequestration. Any increase in the forestry cover combined with targeted agri-environment action, including on wetlands and peatlands, would

assist in addressing this need. The issue arose to some extent during the public consultation process but perhaps more prominently during the SWOT analysis. That found, for example, that there were many opportunities in terms of encouraging the fostering of carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry. Short rotation forestry, energy crops or agro forestry all have significant carbon sequestration potential. Carbon stores in old species rich grasslands can be protected from degradation through specific and targeted agri-environment action. The enhancement of hedges, trees and field margins can improve their carbon storage. In Ireland peatlands can be a significant carbon store, so the development of a measure within an agri environment scheme to protect blanket bog and upland commonage is a possibility in order to conserve this store. However, as is the case of any environmental actions that affect carbon conservation and sequestration, the need to enhance and improve this must also be considered against the potential difficulties in terms of measurement, controls and verification of carbon sequestration. For example there is a need to assess how various land uses, coupled with soil and land management, can enhance soil carbon sequestration in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner so as to inform future land use and land management strategy.

4.2.17. q To contribute to a coordinated approach to the delivery of support for enterprise development and job creation in rural areas

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification
- 3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations
- 5C) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and other non food raw material for the purposes of the bio-economy
- 6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation
- 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas
- 6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Innovation

Description

Key issues that arose in this focus area are the high unemployment rate in, and emigration from, rural areas and the need to respond via targeted training and support for enterprise development and job creation.

Access to credit and finance in general is also an important aspect of initiatives that support enterprise development. There are a number of sectors within the rural economy that have been identified as having potential from the perspective of enterprise development and job creation. These sectors include:

1. Artisan Foods;
2. Renewable Energies;
3. Marine;
4. Social Enterprise; and
5. Creative Industries

In line with available evidence, individual Local Development Strategies (LDS) will be required to examine the potential of these sectors within the LDS process, and in the context of an integrated regional and local planning approach. It is envisaged that this integrated approach to planning at local level will not only maximise the impact of available support but also ensure that responsible bodies are working in a complementary way to ensure this, for example, in areas such as the marine. Support allocated through the LEADER element of the RDP will focus on the need to facilitate specific training and capacity building. This will support enterprise development with identified potential tailored to the LDS area, and working in cooperation with the overall integrated approach to regional and local planning proposed in *'Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government'*. Direct support to enterprise development will also be supported for enterprise initiatives in the SME sector in line with the regulatory framework. While all enterprise initiatives will be considered, the Programme will place a specific focus on the need to provide support to farm families to diversify and explore business opportunities outside the farm-gate.

4.2.18. r - To ensure effective and coordinated use of all available rural resources to support local development in rural areas

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations
- 5C) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and other non food raw material for the purposes of the bio-economy
- 6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation
- 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas
- 6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

Cross cutting objectives

- Environment
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

- Innovation

Description

Existing community structures and social capital can be harnessed to promote social inclusion and the development of rural areas with particular emphasis on all aspects of tourism, food, renewable energy and village renewal.

There is a body of evidence suggesting that rural towns and their hinterlands have felt the negative impacts of the economic downturn in the recent past more than other areas. As rural towns are often the centre of the rural economy, measures must be taken to address this as Ireland emerges from the current crisis or there is a danger that they will be unable to avail of opportunities going forward. In this context, locally based initiatives to stimulate local/rural development are required. Such initiatives should look at a more integrated approach to rural development and promote and utilise all available resources in a given area to promote development in a more coherent and effective way. This kind of initiative will be developed using the LEADER approach to tailor the solution to the particular problems of the areas concerned. The approach will be centred on the development of plans that are integrated into the county and community planning processes outlined in *Putting People First* as well as developed from the LDSs as required in the EU regulatory framework.

4.2.19. s Support & enhance communications initiatives to improve broadband & ICT infrastructure with a particular focus on rural areas

Priorities/Focus Areas

- 1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas
- 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors
- 6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation
- 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas
- 6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

Cross cutting objectives

- Innovation

Description

A recurring theme in the SWOT and consultation process was the importance of the availability and use of high speed broadband in the development of rural areas. The need for high quality broadband has also been identified in 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy – A Framework for Sustainable Economic Recovery', and the report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas. There is recognition that this

challenge is being addressed in other fora.

For example, the investment priorities selected for the Regional OP under ERDF will complement the RDP by investing in high speed broadband services that will address a significant digital divide affecting rural areas thereby improving the environment for innovation, knowledge transfer and economic development in those areas.

However, more needs to be done to ensure that consideration is given to rural areas when working towards achieving national targets to ensure that the development of broadband capacity in rural Ireland does not fall behind that of its urban counterparts. A theme emerging from the preparatory analysis is the potential for the RDP to support infrastructural development in a complementary manner through, for example, training initiatives delivered via LEADER.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGY

5.1. A justification of the needs selected to be addressed by the RDP, and the choice of objectives, priorities, focus areas and the target setting based on evidence from the SWOT and the needs assessment. Where relevant, a justification of thematic sub-programmes included in the programme. The justification shall in particular demonstrate the requirements referred to in Article 8(1)(c)(i) and (iv) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The process of identifying the needs to be addressed by RDP funding and of designing measures in order to address these needs in the most efficient and effective manner was a lengthy and complex undertaking. The foundation for this process was a complex and multi-layered overarching policy framework incorporating:

- Europe 2020,
- Ireland's National Reform Programme,
- the EU Cohesion Legislative Package,
- the Common Strategic Framework, and
- Rural Development legislation.

At the national level, the policy context is framed by the Irish economy emerging from a deep recession in tandem with the strong implementation of and exit from the EU/IMF programme. Ireland's Partnership Agreement sets out the national policy strategies and targets that have been developed in this framework. These targets are linked to each of the 5 headline areas of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Further framing the context for the development of the needs underlying the development of this RDP were a number of key sectoral strategies and reports. For example, the identification of the wider set of challenges and opportunities in rural Ireland identified by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was also of relevance.

Within this context, a comprehensive body of preparatory work has been undertaken in order to establish a sound basis for the identification of needs to be addressed via the RDP. One of the main principles underlying this process has been the need to link the needs to be addressed in the RDP to the real issues faced by rural Ireland. With this in mind, a comprehensive process of stakeholder consultation has underpinned the entire process of RDP development. Section 16 sets out in further detail the various stages of stakeholder consultation which have taken place. What is clear from Section 16 is that this consultation has been strategically targeted at key phases of the RDP development process and that the feedback received from a very wide range of stakeholders has had a tangible impact on the development of the needs, priorities and objectives to be addressed and the measures to be supported under this RDP. This partnership focused approach to the identification of needs and the development of measures was a key element in ensuring that RDP funding is to be targeted at very real and important issues in the sector. This partnership approach also sought to draw on existing expertise and knowledge in the Irish public sector and to engender an integrated and complementary approach to funding.

In tandem with these processes, the independent evaluators engaged to undertake the ex ante evaluation of the RDP were involved in the development of the preparatory analyses underlying the design of the RDP. Their involvement was on the basis of an ongoing engagement with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as the preparatory work developed and the evaluators provided specific feedback and comments as the process progressed which ensured, inter alia, that the identification of needs to be addressed in the RDP was based on a firm foundation. The involvement of the independent evaluators in

this way provided an additional layer of external validation in relation to the justification of the needs identified.

The above approach provides a clear foundation for the extensive work which was involved in developing the Situation Analysis, SWOT analysis and Needs Assessment set out in Section 4. In particular, the Situation and SWOT analyses were designed and undertaken to ensure that a clear understanding of the issues underpinning the identification of investment needs was a central element of RDP design.

The clear link from the overarching policy framework set out in the Partnership Agreement which feeds from identified thematic objectives to the identification of needs in the sector based on the Rural Development Priorities provides a firm and evidence based approach to identifying the intervention logic which underlies this RDP.

The predominant theme which emerged during the development of the SWOT and Needs analyses was that a wide range of issues existed which cut right across the spectrum of the Rural Development Objectives, Priorities and associated Focus Areas. In considering the wide range of evidence and information emerging from the SWOT etc, the approach taken was to prioritise needs that were consistent with the overarching policy context set out above, which were firmly based in the evidence emerging, and which would provide a clear rationale for the investment of EU and national funds over the lifetime of this RDP.

One of the clear priorities for investment which emerged from the above process was the requirement for comprehensive and integrated support for a range of **environmental, climate change and biodiversity issues**. The need for investment in this broad range of investment needs draws from the importance of building on Ireland's existing strength in this area and our 'green reputation' internationally. However, it is also clear that there remains a number of challenges and issues in this area which must be addressed, and these also underlie the identified need for investment via the RDP. Such challenges cut across many of the environmental, biodiversity and climate change themes, and include

- the protection and maintenance of Natura sites
- the protection of habitats for specified species, and associated biodiversity challenges
- the protection and maintenance of high status water areas
- enhanced nutrient management practices
- support for the maintenance of landscapes and the continuation of farming practices which are beneficial in this regard
- the promotion of carbon sequestration and the management of carbon stores
- the promotion of a range of practices aimed at lower emissions levels
- increasing resource efficiency, and the sustainability of farming practices in general, and
- working within the framework of various EU directives and national and international targets as set out in Section 8.2.5.2 (GLAS).

The need to address this priority area encompasses not only the introduction of a broad based Agri-Environment and Climate Measure, but also included the need to address these issues in ways such as the development of the relevant knowledge base and skills set, support for maintaining farming in accordance with relevant environmental standards on land that may otherwise be threatened with abandonment, and

support for farmers to invest in their holdings to make them more efficient and thus more sustainable.

In addition to addressing these issues at national level, the preparatory analysis underlying the RDP also highlighted a requirement to address **particular environmental and biodiversity challenges at a targeted and local level** in order to ensure a more sustainable and efficient sector. This is in recognition of the fact that not all environmental challenges can be addressed at the national level. Rather a more focused approach based on local circumstances and conditions is appropriate in certain instances. Key needs in this regard include an extension of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme and support for freshwater pearl mussel catchment areas. In addition, in the interest of identifying the most environmentally beneficial investments a competitive process will be put in place to identify a number of other specific projects. In order to ensure that support in this area is fully integrated with national level schemes, support here will be provided by way of the first amendment to the RDP, within twelve months of RDP implementation, and once the national measures are operational.

A further priority need identified in this RDP is the need to support **continued viability and competitiveness** in the sector. Central themes emerging in this regard from the preparatory analysis include the importance of providing support for farmers to develop and modernise their holdings via capital investment, and the importance of supporting farmers facing particular viability challenges or production challenges. Thus, the evidence emerging from the preparatory analysis underpins support for a range of areas where farmers will be able to target capital investment in order to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of their holdings, and where viability and competitiveness challenges can be addressed via particular measures.

Within this priority of enhanced viability and competitiveness, it is also recognised that there are a number of key **structural challenges** which must be addressed. For example, the age profile and gender profile of Irish farmers is clearly referenced in the SWOT analysis. The identified need here thus centred around providing support for identified groups. Interventions aimed at opening up new channels of entry to farming and access to land and targeted investment support emerged from the preparatory analysis as important in this regard. It is also important to note that many of the investment priorities and needs identified in this process may be taken up in ways other than direct measure design. For example, in designing the National Rural Network, it is intended that the gender imbalance will feature as a key issue to be addressed. It should also be noted that, at the national level, the Agri-Taxation Review Group has included in its work plan the identification of any barriers to greater female participation in the sector.

A further priority for investment which has links to the various priority needs identified above is that of support for increasing levels of **innovation and the knowledge base** in the sector. This is a theme which emerged from the SWOT in a number of formats, including the need to develop the knowledge and skills base of farmers in key areas, the need to ensure that advisory services firmly rooted in best practice are in place, and the importance of strengthening links between innovative practice and on the ground practices.

Support for **targeted, locally led development**, is also an identified priority area in this RDP. This will be delivered via the LEADER mechanism on the basis of locally developed Local Development Strategies. While the content of these strategies cannot be pre-empted, it is clear that a wide range of potential investment areas arose from the preparatory analysis, including social inclusion issues, job creation and economic development in rural areas, support for training and basic services investments, and support for local small enterprises. As the RDP design process developed, a set of themes has emerged in relation to LEADER which reflect the priorities emerging from the preparatory analysis and are also linked to the Rural Development Priorities. These themes include

- Rural Economic Development / Enterprise Development / Job Creation, incorporating rural tourism,

enterprise development, broadband training and rural towns;

- Social inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation; and
- Rural environment

While LEADER will be programmed under Priority 6B, there is scope for LEADER projects to contribute to other Priorities and Focus Areas in a way that will complement other supports provided.

While the above areas represent the main priorities selected for investment in this RDP, it should also be noted that there were issues and challenges which arose during the preparatory analyses and which are not supported by investment in this RDP, or are afforded a more modest level of support. For example, while issues of weather related, natural and manmade risks and dependence on imported feed and fertilisers did arise during the SWOT analysis, they did not emerge as areas to be prioritised for investment in the RDP. Similarly, the issue of forestry arose during the SWOT analysis. However, in deciding not to include specific support for forestry in this RDP, it was taken into consideration that DAFM has submitted a proposal to the EU Commission for 100% state aid funding for a new Forestry Programme for the period to 2014 – 2020 based on 4 identified sectoral needs:

- Permanently increase forest cover to produce wood, capture carbon and assist mitigation;
- Sustainably increase forest-based biomass production to meet renewable energy targets;
- Support forest holders to actively manage their plantations; &
- Optimise the environmental and social benefits of new and existing forests.

In increasing forest cover, priority will be given to restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity including in Natura 2000 areas. The Programme proposes a range of measures that include supports for afforestation and woodland creation, construction of forest roads, forest reconstitution following significant natural damage, forest management operations, conservation of native woodlands, knowledge transfer and innovation, producer groups etc. Thus, it was felt that the forestry issue was being addressed nationally.

Support for bioenergy production was another thematic area emerging from the SWOT and Needs analyses. However, following on from a review of the operation of the Bioenergy Scheme in the 2007-2013 RDP, it has been decided to amend the design of the Scheme and to seek to run this new version of the Scheme as a pilot project via national funding in 2015. This approach is aimed at achieving a more efficient and effective policy response to the issue at hand.

In relation to peatlands, GLAS in Measure 10 includes a number of actions which will address peatlands management issues. However, when designing the RDP it was also recognised that there are other ongoing policy initiatives in the area of peatlands restoration. In particular, in January 2014, the Government published 3 significant documents for consultation, namely:

- a first ever draft National Peatlands Strategy,
- a draft National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan, and
- a Review of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network designated under national legislation.

Taken together, these three documents outline a comprehensive, strategic approach to the long-term management of peatlands in Ireland. They will drive the implementation of the most effective policies and actions at all levels as well as setting out clear and concrete plans for specific peatlands sites throughout the state.

Other issues which arose might be expected to feature in LEADER, although it is difficult to pre-empt what might arise in the development of Local Development Strategies. For example, it would be expected based on past experience that issues that arose in the preparatory analysis such as training for non-farmers, and support for diversification projects might feature in LEADER projects. Similarly, issues identified in the preparatory analysis relating to farmers position in the market will be addressed by two schemes to be delivered via LEADER, while national initiatives in relation to, for example, producer groups in the beef and dairy sector were also a relevant consideration here.

While the range of needs identified at a more detailed level is set out in Section 4, it is clear that a wide ranging set of needs emerged from the preparatory analysis which underlies the development of this RDP. These identified needs, which are logically linked to the issues identified in the SWOT and Situation analyses, have formed the basis for the choice of objectives, priorities and focus areas to be addressed in this RDP.

The emergence of a wide range of needs from the preparatory analyses set out in Section 4 underlies the approach to addressing investment priorities in this RDP. All the Rural Development Objectives and Priorities as contained in the Rural Development Regulation will be addressed by this RDP. As set out below, the cross cutting and integrated nature of measure design means that measures will necessarily contribute to multiple Priorities and related Focus Areas.

In relation specifically to Objectives set out in the Rural Development Regulation, it is clear from the issues which arose in the analyses in Section 4 that investment priorities exist in relation to each objective. Thus, the RDP will contribute to the three objectives as set out in Rural Development Regulation, namely

- fostering the competitiveness of agriculture,
- ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, and
- achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

Similarly, the nature of the evidence which emerged from the preparatory analyses underlies the broad based approach evident in the RDP in relation to the expected contribution to particular rural development Priorities and Focus Areas. This is set out in greater detail below, as the particular measures which have been chosen on foot of the evidence arising from the preparatory analyses are set out in conjunction with relevant Focus Areas.

The process of selecting and designing rural development measures for inclusion in this RDP has been firmly based in the preparatory work such as the Situation, SWOT and Needs analyses contained in this RDP. Thus, the measures outlined in this RDP establish clear linkages between identified needs in rural Ireland, the Rural Development Priorities set out in the Rural Development Regulation, and the wider policy context set out in this RDP and in Ireland's Partnership Agreement. Consequently, in selecting and designing measures, the need to ensure that measures are firmly rooted in a clear intervention logic was at

all times central to the process.

Choice and combination of measures

The combination of measures relating to specific Priorities and Focus Areas is set out in Section 5.2. It should be noted that in linking up the needs identified and the measures to be delivered:

- the measures under consideration were designed to cut across a number of Rural Development Priorities and associated Focus Areas in order to maximise the benefit to be delivered. Thus, for example, the design of the on farm capital investment measure was designed in a manner that would make a contribution to a range of priority areas such as viability and competitiveness, environmental and sustainability issues, and animal health issues. This is a recurring theme in the outline of this RDP's measures set out below.
- the measures were designed to cross cut with each other in a way that was mutually supportive and integrated. Thus, for example, the knowledge transfer measures outlined in the RDP will support the development of the sector's knowledge base as an end in itself but will also be fundamentally linked to the benefits to be gained, for example, from the agri-environment and climate measures set out in this RDP.

Finally, it should also be noted that, in developing the measures contained in this RDP, cognisance was also taken of the experience gained in measure design and implementation in previous programming periods, the need to lessen administrative burden, complementarity with other funding mechanisms, and the need to target the achievement of value for money.

5.2. The combination and justification of the rural development measures for each focus area including the justification of the financial allocations to the measures and the adequacy of the financial resources with the targets set as referred to in Article 8(1)(c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. The combination of measures included in the intervention logic shall be based on the evidence from the SWOT analysis and justification and prioritisation of needs referred to in point 5.1

5.2.1. P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

5.2.1.1. 1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas

5.2.1.1.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.1.1.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The main measures selected to address this focus area are Measure 16- EIP Operational Groups and support for Collaborative Farming, Measure 1 - Knowledge Transfer Groups, Measure 2 - CPD for advisors, Targeted Advisory Service for Animal Health and Welfare,

In each case, measure design has built on clearly established themes emerging from the SWOT analysis. Fostering innovation and enhancing the knowledge base will underpin a more efficient and effective sector. While mutually supportive, these measures are designed on varying delivery mechanisms targeted at specifically identified needs. The combined effect will lead to greater uptake of best practice and the more effective delivery of RDP support as a whole.

5.2.1.2. 1B) Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance

5.2.1.2.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.1.2.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The main measure selected to address this focus area is Measure 16 - EIP Operational Groups.

Current and future research, and the adaptation of it, can play an important part in underpinning increased

efficiency and competitiveness by nurturing best practice in a wide range of areas such as maximising nutrient efficiencies, reducing emissions, informing adaptation and mitigating impacts of climate change, and the introduction of cutting edge production methods. EIP Operational Groups in particular are designed to strengthen the links between research, innovation and on farm practices.

Measures 2(CPD for advisors) and 1(Knowledge Transfer Groups) will also ensure that the most up to date and innovative practices feed into the knowledge base of the sector and could be considered relevant to this focus area, although they are not programmed here. Finally, the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (measure 10) has at its centre the use of innovative techniques and research to underpin more efficient and climate friendly practices in the suckler herd.

5.2.1.3. 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors

5.2.1.3.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)

5.2.1.3.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The main measure selected to address this focus area are Measure 1 - Knowledge Transfer Groups.

Knowledge Transfer Groups will ensure the acquisition of new skills among farmers of all ages.

In addition, targeted training has been incorporated into the GLAS and BDGP design (measure 10) to ensure that environmental training continues to be delivered to farmers and that delivery of these schemes is optimised. This training will be delivered under measure 1.

CPD for advisors (measure 2) will similarly underpin the development of new knowledge and skills, although this is not programmed under this focus area.

5.2.2. P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests

5.2.2.1. 2A) Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification

5.2.2.1.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.2.1.2. **Combination and justification of rural development measures**

The main measures selected to address this focus area are Measure 4 - On Farm Capital Investment (TAMS II) and Measure 16 - Collaborative Farming.

Measure 4 (TAMS II) responds to a wide range of areas identified during the preparatory analyses. The clear message that emerged was that renewed capital investment would underpin competitiveness by encouraging the upgrading and modernisation of holdings. The investment priorities identified will support farmers in responding to competitiveness challenges by investing in, for example, the upgrading of dairy equipment to allow expansion in a post quota market, and/or the modernisation of animal housing facilities.

The Collaborative Farming measure (measure 16) approaches the issue of economic performance and modernisation from the perspective of some of the structural issues highlighted in the SWOT, such as land mobility and demographics. Support for collaborative farming is designed to encourage an increased level of farm partnerships and other collaborative approaches with the attendant economic, structural and skills related benefits.

It should also be noted, that the integrated design of RDP measures which is firmly based on establishing a clear intervention logic linking back to the Rural Development Priorities means that there are a number of other measures in the RDP which would be expected to be beneficial in terms of the themes of economic performance, restructuring or modernisation but which would not be as focused on these themes as the aforementioned measures. For example, it would be expected that Knowledge Transfer Groups (measure 1), Targeted Animal Health Advice (measure 2), and EIP Operational Groups (measure 16) would also have beneficial effects.

Likewise, support for ANCs (measure 13) would be expected to provide an important support to the viability of particular farms, thus underpinning economic performance and competitiveness, although it has

not been programmed under this focus area.

5.2.2.2. 2B) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal

5.2.2.2.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.2.2.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The issue of entry to the farming sector and generational renewal were clearly identified in the SWOT and Needs analyses. The primary measures included in the RDP to address this Focus Area are the targeted support under Measure 4 - TAMS II and Measure 16 - Collaborative Farming

One of the barriers identified to young farmers entering the sector, or expanding their venture, is the high cost of the necessary capital investment. This need is addressed in the overarching design of TAMS II (measure 4). However, in order to target support specifically at encouraging young farmers and to enable them to take on necessary infrastructural work the measure design incorporates a higher rate of aid intensity for young farmers as provided for under the terms of the Rural Development Regulation. Thus, young farmers as defined in the Rural Development Regulation are eligible for a grant support of 60% of the eligible costs for identified capital projects. This 60% rate compares very favourably to the general 40% rate, and is designed to be a significant support for young farmers (and as a complement to the Young Farmer Scheme under Pillar 1). As a complement to this, the Collaborative Farming measure (measure 16) has been designed to address some of the structural issues facing young farmers entering the sector and which inhibit generational renewal. In particular, the Collaborative Farming measure is designed to alleviate issues relating to land mobility and channels of access to the sector.

Thus, this focus area is approached from different perspectives in order to more fully address the underlying issues.

5.2.3. P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

5.2.3.1. 3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations

5.2.3.1.1. Choice of rural development measures

5.2.3.1.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

Themes emerging from the SWOT analysis relevant to this Focus Area include the challenges for primary producers in integrating themselves into the food chain, and the need to add value to agricultural products. In responding to these issues, stand alone measures had originally been considered. However, given the congruence with emerging LEADER themes, support in this area has now been integrated into the LEADER mechanism. While these measures make a contribution under this Focus Area, they are to be programmed under 6(b) as they are to be delivered via LEADER.

Further detail in relation to the Food measures to be delivered via LEADER is provided in Chapter 8.

5.2.3.2. 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management

5.2.3.2.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)

5.2.3.2.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The main measures aimed at addressing this Focus Area are Measure 2 - Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory measure, Measure 1 - Knowledge Transfer Groups and Measure 4 (TAMS II). While animal welfare is referenced in the overarching priority 3 it is not referenced in a specific Focus Area. However, in designing this RDP, the theme of building on the current animal welfare systems in place and proactively addressing the risk of disease outbreaks emerged clearly from the preparatory analyses. Accordingly, a Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory measure (measure 2) has been included to complement the other elements of knowledge transfer which are integrated across the RDP. This will strategically target a number of core areas where the economic rationale for managing the risk of animal disease is particularly prominent. Such areas include Johne's disease, BVD, SCC and PRRS. In order to ensure a high quality, tailored response to this issue the measure will incorporate both training of the advisors and a farm specific delivery. The outputs which will enable farmers to better manage the risk of disease outbreak will be encapsulated in an action plan agreed with the advisor with specific, actionable recommendations.

While there was not a clear support / need emerging for a risk management scheme per se, the approach of including financial and risk management issues into knowledge transfer measures did emerge from stakeholder consultations. The Knowledge Transfer Groups (measure 1) will also include a focus on this particular area. Firstly, particular groups will include animal health and welfare issues as a complement to the above advisory measure. In addition, wider elements of risk and financial management and prevention have been incorporated into the outputs and actions to be delivered by certain Knowledge Transfer Groups. This latter element corresponds to a particular need identified in the preparatory analyses.

The Animal Welfare and Farm Safety strand of support under TAMS II (measure 4) will also address this focus area through its operation.

5.2.4. P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

5.2.4.1. 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes

5.2.4.1.1. Measures for agricultural land

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)
- M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)
- M11 - Organic farming (art 29)
- M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)
- M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.4.1.2. Measures for forestry land

5.2.4.1.3. **Combination and justification of rural development measures**

The challenges relating to biodiversity, Natura 2000 areas, ANCs and landscape maintenance were clear themes emerging from stakeholder consultation and the SWOT. Under Measure 10, GLAS will make a clear contribution to this focus areas, including via the categorisation of actions related to particular species, commonages and private Natura sites as priority environmental assets and the provision of support for actions such as wild bird cover, traditional hay meadows, coppicing of hedgerows and bat and bird boxes.

The incorporation of core mandatory requirements and the focus on the farmer delivering actions that will provide the most environmental benefit on their farm will ensure the optimum environmental impact.

Mandatory training for all GLAS participants is relevant to this focus area as it will provide an appreciation of the importance and preservation of Natura 2000 sites and important bird and wildlife habitats.

In keeping with the integrated approach to measure design and the significance attached to the environmental issues emerging, a number of other measures have been designed in order to reinforce and complement the benefits to be delivered by GLAS. At a more local level, it is expected that local targeted schemes to be developed as an amendment to the RDP will also make a clear contribution in this area.

ANCs (measure 13) will also make an important contribution to this Focus Area by supporting the continuation of farming in accordance with environmental standards in areas facing particular constraints. This will deliver a range of benefits in areas such as the maintenance of habitats for biodiversity and also the preservation of landscapes and the delivery of associated public good benefits.

The OFS (measure 11) will also make a clear contribution to this focus area. The farming practices it promotes contribute to improving soil & water quality, to mitigation of/ adaptation to climate change and to the improvement of biodiversity.

The GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings (measure 7) will make an important contribution to this focus as the measure seeks to enhance the significant positive contribution that traditional farm buildings make to the Irish rural landscape. Furthermore, restoring these buildings can also improve habitats and biodiversity, particularly for certain protected wildlife species, such as bats and birds.

5.2.4.2. 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management

5.2.4.2.1. Measures for agricultural land

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)
- M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)
- M11 - Organic farming (art 29)

- M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)
- M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.4.2.2. Measures for forestry land

5.2.4.2.3. Combination and justification of rural development measures

Issues relating to improved water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management featured in the preparatory analysis for the RDP. Under Measure 10, GLAS will make a clear contribution. Relevant actions include support for riparian margins, high status water areas, protection of water courses, and low emission slurry spreading.

The Organic Farming Scheme (measure 11) will also make a clear contribution to this focus area. The farming practices it promotes contribute to improving soil and water quality, to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and to the improvement of the state of biodiversity e.g. by crop rotation, use of organic fertilisers, improvement to soil organic matter and by no use of synthetic plant protection products or synthetic fertilisers. Similar support for investment in physical assets under TAMS II (measure 4) will include investments relevant to this Focus Area, both in the specific organic capital investment and farm nutrient storage strands of support.

Support for knowledge transfer (measure 1) and advisory actions (measure 2) is also relevant here, not only via supporting increases in the environmental knowledge base generally in the sector but also specifically via a specific knowledge transfer group in the tillage sector which includes a focus on integrated pest management.

Mandatory training for all GLAS participants to be delivered under measure 1 is relevant to this focus area as it will include information on the consequences of agricultural pollution and nutrient management.

5.2.4.3. 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

5.2.4.3.1. Measures for agricultural land

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)
- M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)
- M11 - Organic farming (art 29)
- M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)
- M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)

- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.4.3.2. Measures for forestry land

5.2.4.3.3. Combination and justification of rural development measures

Again, many of the actions included in GLAS in measure 10 will make a key contribution to this Focus Area. These actions include green cover establishment, low input permanent pasture, minimum tillage, catch crops, riparian margins and the maintenance of traditional hay meadows.

The Organic Farming Scheme (measure 11) will also make a clear contribution to this focus area. The farming practices it promotes contribute to improving soil and water quality, to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and to the improvement of the state of biodiversity e.g. by crop rotation, use of organic fertilisers, improvement to soil organic matter and by no use of synthetic plant protection products or synthetic fertilisers.

Support for knowledge transfer (measure 1) and advisory services (measure 2) will also make a contribution here by supporting the development of the knowledge base in the sector in general and in relation to environmental issues in particular. Mandatory training for all GLAS participants to be delivered under measure 1 is relevant to this focus area.

5.2.5. P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors

5.2.5.1. 5A) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture

5.2.5.1.1. Choice of rural development measures

5.2.5.1.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

This focus area relates to the efficient use of water and more efficient irrigation systems (as indicated by the associated output target). Accordingly, while the RDP has a number of measures which address water quality issues and sustainable water usage has been highlighted as a possible LEADER (measure 19) theme, there are no measures linked to this Focus Area in the RDP as it is not an issue which emerged from the preparatory analyses as an investment priority. As noted above, however, general water efficiency issues remain as an issue of national importance in the context of WFD requirements and there is scope under TAMSII (measure 4) to address this.

5.2.5.2. 5B) *Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing*

5.2.5.2.1. **Choice of rural development measures**

- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)

5.2.5.2.2. **Combination and justification of rural development measures**

The main measure contributing to this focus area is Measure 4 - TAMS II, which will provide for support for more efficient energy usage. The preparatory analyses highlighted that energy input costs have been rising in the agri-food sector and that certain sectors are particularly energy intensive. For example, the pig and poultry sector has been identified as one such sector and TAMS II includes a strand which will specifically support, inter alia, pig and poultry energy related investments.

A broad theme emerging from stakeholder analyses and the SWOT was the opportunity for expansion which is offered by the abolition of milk quotas in 2015. However, the abolition of quotas themselves will not offer automatic expansion and profitability for Irish farmers. In order to fully realise the potential for growth offered by the abolition of milk quotas, milk farmers must invest and expand in a way that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. In this regard, the On Farm Capital Investment measure has identified investment in dairy equipment as a priority for investment and elements of this support (e.g. for better storage and cooling equipment) will have positive impacts in terms of the efficiency of energy usage in the sector.

5.2.5.3. 5C) *Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and other non food raw material for the purposes of the bio-economy*

5.2.5.3.1. **Choice of rural development measures**

5.2.5.3.2. **Combination and justification of rural development measures**

There is no measure selected as contributing to this focus area. However it is possible that renewable energy will be an indicative theme for LEADER.

While the relevant EU Commission Guidance suggests that all LEADER measures will be programmed under Focus Area 6(b) it is important to note the possible synergy for this Focus Area. While clarity in relation to actual projects to be supported under LEADER will only emerge once local development strategies have been developed, one of the themes arising in the preparatory work undertaken on LEADER to date is the issue of bio and renewable energy. The development of any such support under LEADER will of course take full cognisance of the nationally funded supports already in place to ensure a strategic and complementary approach.

5.2.5.4. 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

5.2.5.4.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)
- M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)
- M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)
- M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)
- M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

5.2.5.4.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

There are a number of measures in the RDP which will have a positive effect on emissions, including Measure 10 – GLAS and the Beef Data and Genomics Programme, Measure 4 - TAMS II, Measure 1- Knowledge Transfer Groups and Measure 2 CPD for advisors.

One of the major themes emerging from the SWOT analysis etc was the need to balance the development of the Irish agri-food sector with the possible consequent climate change effects and Ireland's targets in relation to same. Accordingly, the issue of climate change and emissions has been prioritised in the design of the RDP.

GLAS (measure 10) includes actions targeted at emissions levels (such as support for low emissions slurry spreading and minimum tillage) and sequestration actions, and these actions are complemented by support under TAMS II (measure 4) for low emission spreading equipment.

The Beef Data and Genomics Programme (measure 10) has also been designed with a core focus on lowering emissions via support for increases in herd quality and efficiency.

While the above measures clearly link to emissions benefits, it is also important that there is an appropriate knowledge base in the sector in relation to climate change issues if they are to be addressed in the most efficient manner. Accordingly, the Knowledge Transfer Groups (measure 1) and Beef Data and Genomics Programme will include a significant roll out of the Carbon Navigator model on a nationwide basis. Specific training in relation to the BDGP scheme and focussed training on the carbon navigator will be delivered under measure 1. Finally, CPD for advisors (measure 2) will ensure that best practice on climate change issues is disseminated across the sector.

It is also likely that, as the priority areas for EIP Operational Groups (measure 16) emerge, climate change or emissions issues may be one area where support is focused. Given the bottom up nature of support under this measure, however it is not possible to guarantee at this stage.

5.2.5.5. 5E) *Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry*

5.2.5.5.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)

5.2.5.5.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The Measure contributing to this Focus Area is Measure 10 - GLAS.

The SWOT analysis identified potential opportunities for positive action in this area. Building on this and the feedback received from stakeholder consultation, a number of actions have been built into the design of GLAS in order to underpin carbon conservation and sequestration. These include support for enhancement of margins, planting a grove of native trees, and plating, laying and coppicing hedgerows, as well as positive linking to the nationally-funded afforestation programme.

The reintroduction of support for the GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme (measure 7) will also make an indirect contribution towards carbon conservation through encouraging the restoration and reuse of older buildings in place of new builds. However, it has not been programmed under this focus area.

5.2.6. P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

5.2.6.1. 6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation

5.2.6.1.1. Choice of rural development measures

5.2.6.1.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The EU Commission guidance suggests that all LEADER actions should be programmed under priority 6(b). Actions under this Focus Area will be incorporated into the development of local development strategies under LEADER.

While the RDP will not pre-empt the content of Local Development Strategies, some of the emerging indicative themes for LEADER are relevant to this Focus Area – for example Rural Economic Development / Enterprise Development / Job Creation incorporating rural tourism and enterprise development.

5.2.6.2. 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas

5.2.6.2.1. Choice of rural development measures

- M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35)

5.2.6.2.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

As per the relevant EU Commission Guidance, LEADER measures will be programmed under this Focus Area.

The LEADER measure (measure 19) will be programmed to support the unique characteristics of the LEADER methodology where individual operations shall be eligible if they contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the Local Development Strategy and correspond to the objectives and priorities indicated for support under LEADER in the Partnership Agreement and the RDP.

The SWOT and needs analyses have identified a number of strong themes that may be addressed through RDP interventions , including Rural Economic Development / Enterprise Development / Job Creation incorporating rural tourism, enterprise development, broadband training and rural towns;

Social inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation; and

Rural environment.

There is also potential for LEADER to contribute to the objectives of the RDP across other Priorities and Focus Areas in a way that is complementary to other Measures and that draws on clearly identified local needs.

5.2.6.3. 6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

5.2.6.3.1. Choice of rural development measures

5.2.6.3.2. Combination and justification of rural development measures

The EU Commission guidance suggests that all LEADER actions should be programmed under priority 6(b). Actions under this Focus Area will be incorporated into the development of local development strategies under LEADER.

While the RDP will not pre-empt the content of Local Development Strategies, some of the emerging indicative themes for LEADER are relevant to this Focus Area. In particular, potential support for training in ICT / broadband is relevant here.

5.3. A description of how the cross-cutting objectives will be addressed, including the specific requirements in Article 8(1)(c)(v) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The Rural Development Regulation sets out that all the Rural Development Priorities shall contribute to the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Accordingly, these three cross-cutting themes were at the forefront of the design process for this RDP.

Innovation

Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation is one of the Thematic Objectives flowing from the Europe 2020 process. The theme of supporting and fostering innovation was also one which emerged strongly from the stakeholder consultation process and the development of the SWOT and Needs analyses. It is clear that the promotion of innovation is seen as a vital element in addressing the challenges and opportunities evident in rural Ireland, and this is reflected in the prominent position accorded to the issue of innovation in the measures outlined in this RDP.

A vital element in supporting innovative practices is ensuring that the appropriate knowledge base is in place. Support for an enhanced knowledge base is a central theme running through the design of the measures in this RDP. For example, the support provided for Knowledge Transfer Groups will enable large numbers of farmers to update their knowledge base and skills profile which will in turn enable them to take on new and innovative practices.

The establishment and support of European Innovation Partnership (EIP) operational groups is a further important support in this regard. By their very nature, these EIP operational groups will act as a catalyst for change in helping to bring grassroots innovative ideas to implementation using an interactive and bottom up approach. EIP operational groups will establish linkages between cutting edge research and technology and mobilise stakeholders to develop innovative solutions aimed at enhancing productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. The operational groups will also be required to disseminate their findings, thus ensuring that innovative approaches become more widely accessible and available.

The Beef Data and Genomics Programme is also fundamentally rooted in encouraging innovative practice. The support for genetic advances and genomics will underpin innovative practice which will deliver significant climate change gains in a strategically important sector of the Irish agri-food sector.

In addition to the above elements where the primary focus of the measure includes innovation, support for innovation is also integrated in to the design of measure design in a range of areas, including:

- The provision of targeted advisory services on animal health issues will encourage new approaches to these vital issues by farmers.
- The inclusion of training for farmers and the mandatory use of an approved planner in GLAS will ensure that best and innovative practice is embedded across the implementation of the measure

- The provision of continuing professional development for approved planners will ensure that the most up to date knowledge and advice is central to RDP implementation in key policy areas identified.
- Support for collaborative farming will help to encourage the pooling of knowledge and skills sets thus encouraging innovative approaches
- Support for young farmers will help more young farmers enter the sector and establish themselves. Young farmers tend to be more open to taking on new and innovative approaches.
- Support for locally targeted approaches to particular environment problems will encourage the development of innovative solutions based on particular local conditions (to be developed as an amendment to the RDP).
- TAMS II will provide direct support for farmers to invest in innovative practices in areas such as low emission spreading, slurry storage etc encouraged by complementary actions in GLAS.
- LEADER measures will include support for innovative actions, and innovative approaches have been a cornerstone of the LEADER approach in previous programming periods.

Environment

Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency is one of the Thematic Objectives flowing from the Europe 2020 process. Again, the importance of ensuring that developments in the sector take real and prioritised cognisance of the environmental consequences of particular actions and of the environmental challenges facing Ireland was a central theme emerging from the stakeholder consultation process and the development of the SWOT and Needs analyses.

Thus, the environment cross-cutting objective was also a central consideration at all stages of the RDP design process and this is clearly reflected in the design of the measures selected for investment.

The RDP includes a number of measures that can be grouped thematically together as primarily addressing this cross cutting objective. Firstly, GLAS is obviously focused on the provision of clear environmental benefits across a wide range of areas. Drawing on the experience of support for agri-environment schemes in the previous RDP period, a number of design features have been put in place to ensure that the environmental benefits accruing from this support are maximised. These design features include

- a tiered structure allowing for general environmental needs to be addressed at one level while more targeted needs can also be addressed
- the introduction of mandatory requirements in relation to record keeping, the involvement of a planner, the use of a nutrient management plan and knowledge transfer
- a new focus on requiring farmers to undertake the actions of most benefit to their holding, and
- a recognition of the constraints on farmers in Natura 2000 areas and the importance of addressing particular habitat and biodiversity threats.

As a complement to the national level GLAS scheme, targeted and locally led output based environmental projects will also be supported. This support is provided in the context of establishing a strong sustainable

base for Irish agriculture, which not just respects the environment but shows itself capable of responding effectively and appropriately to a range of environmental challenges. This support also recognises the fact that not all environmental challenges are best addressed at the national level, and this measure thus complements the approach under GLAS as part as an integrated and mutually supportive set of measures which contribute to the environment cross-cutting objective.

The Organic Farming scheme also clearly contributes to this cross-cutting theme by its very nature. Support aimed at encouraging new entrants to the sector and at maintaining those within the sector will directly lead to increased levels of farming practices that contribute to environmental benefits in areas such as soil and water quality, biodiversity challenges, and reduced levels of synthetic chemicals.

While the above three measures can be seen to be primarily aimed at environmental issues, a characteristic of measure design has been to also incorporate this cross cutting theme across the RDP. This is reflective of the aim of developing a RDP design with integrated and mutually reinforcing measures. Thus, further positive contributions to environmental issues are evident across the range of measures. For example,

- Support for knowledge transfer outside of the mandatory training in GLAS will ensure that best practice in relation to environmental issues is clearly set out both for farmers in knowledge transfer groups and advisors undertaking continuing professional development.
- There is potential for the outcomes of EIP operational groups to feed into best environmental practice and to identify new solutions to environmental problems.
- Support under the Areas of Natural Constraint measure will provide valuable support to farmers facing increased costs and lower incomes and thus contribute to their continued farming of land in compliance with the requirements to keep the land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition.
- On farm capital support will have positive environmental impacts by supporting more efficient holdings in general as well as specifically supporting investment in areas specifically aimed at providing environmental benefits, such as slurry storage.
- The Beef Data and Genomics Programme will support a more efficient, and thus more environmentally friendly, sector, while support for collaborative measures will also encourage efficiencies which will have positive environmental effects.
- The design process for LEADER measures identified environmental issues, including the protection and sustainable use of water resources and the protection and improvement of local biodiversity as key themes emerging for funding under the RDP. While not pre-empting the LDS process, it is anticipated that a rural environment theme will feature in the LDS design process, and the design of support in this regard will include cross cutting linkages to collective actions in other agri-environment and climate supports.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Promoting climate change adaptation, risk management and prevention is one of the Thematic Objectives flowing from the Europe 2020 process. Again, the importance of ensuring that developments in the sector focus on the climate change impacts of particular actions and of the linked challenges facing Ireland was a central theme emerging from the stakeholder consultation process and the development of the SWOT and

Needs analyses.

In recognition of this, consideration of climate change mitigation and adaptation has been integrated into the measure design process across the RDP. As with the environmental cross-cutting theme, this is most obvious in the makeup of the suite of agri-environment and climate measures. GLAS contains a number of actions which are designed to provide climate change benefits, including support for low emission slurry spreading, minimum tillage, tree planting, new hedgerows, the protection of riverbanks from erosion, and the preservation of margins and habitats. This theme is then reinforced in other measures of the RDP. For example, support under TAMS II for investing in trailing shoe technology clearly reinforces the policy direction of the relevant measures in GLAS.

The knowledge transfer measures also play a key role in this area. Continuing Professional Development for Advisors and Knowledge Transfer groups will work to ensure that the best and most up to date advice in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation is available to farmers and advisors. In addition, the Measure 1 - Knowledge Transfer Groups and Measure 10 - Beef Data and Genomics Programme have incorporated a large scale roll out of the carbon navigator into the measure design. The Carbon Navigator will enable farmers to understand how their farms produce greenhouse gases, put in place procedures to identify their mitigation capacity, and set targets to reduce their emissions.

EIP operational groups offer the potential for particular climate change issues to be addressed, while the targeted advisory service on animal health issues also has an established link to climate change issues. For example, the greenhouse gas savings arising as a result of eradicating BVD are estimated to be in the order of €26m per year, while control of Johne's disease and dairy cow mastitis (SCC reduction) would also be expected to contribute positively to greenhouse gas abatement.

The Beef Data and Genomics Programme will also provide clear climate change benefits. Some of the main benefits that will accrue on farms supported by this measure have been identified in research by Teagasc (the Irish Agriculture & Food Development Authority) as the three most cost-efficient climate change mitigation measures. These beneficial outputs of the measure are:

- Support for the establishment of an Economic Breeding Index which allows farmers to identify quality issues at birth and select the highest quality animals
- Extended grazing periods. The measure will also underpin the selection of higher quality animals that will be suited to Ireland's grass based system.

The measure design process has identified renewable energy as a theme emerging for investment under LEADER and support for this type of intervention at sub-regional level will be encouraged as part of the local development strategy process.

5.4. A summary table of the intervention logic showing the priorities and focus areas selected for the RDP, the quantified targets, and the combination of measures to be used to achieve them, including the planned expenditure (table automatically generated from the information provided in sections 5.2 and 11)

Priority 1				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
1A	T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	3.60%		M01, M02, M16
1B	T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	1,210.00		M16
1C	T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	111,600.00		M01
Priority 2				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
2A	T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	9.11%	169,250,000.00	M01, M02, M04, M16
2B	T5: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)	2.86%	122,250,000.00	M04, M16
Priority 3				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
3B	Number of Participants in Knowledge Transfer Groups (focus area 3B) (Persons)	26,600.00	56,000,000.00	M01, M02, M04
Priority 4				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
4A (agri)	T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	20.77%	2,873,000,630.00	M01, M02, M04, M07, M10, M11, M12, M13, M16
4B (agri)	T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	20.91%		
4C (agri)	T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	18.08%		
Priority 5				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
5B	T15: Total investment for energy efficiency (€) (focus area 5B)	50,000,000.00	20,000,000.00	M04
5D	T17: percentage of LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	0.20%	344,200,000.00	M01, M02, M04, M10, M16
	T18: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	10.79%		
5E	T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	0.32%	74,800,000.00	M10
Priority 6				
Focus Area	Target indicator name	Target value 2023	Planned expenditure	Combination of measures
6B	T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	74.40%	250,000,000.00	M19
	T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)			
	T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	3,100.00		

5.5. A description of the advisory capacity to ensure adequate advice and support for the regulatory requirements and for actions related to innovation to demonstrate the measures taken as required in Article 8(1)(c)(vi) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

This section sets out the type of actions envisaged during the RDP programming period to ensure availability and sufficient advisory capacity on a) the regulatory requirements and b) actions relating to innovation.

Regulatory Requirements

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine encompasses the Managing Authority for the EAFRD, and within the Department the Rural Development Division assumes the primary responsibility for overseeing effective implementation of the regulatory requirements set out in the Rural Development Regulation and other relevant EU legislation. In order to ensure that the Managing Authority remains up to date in relation to these regulations, it will continue to attend relevant meetings and implementation information events as they arise at EU level. The Managing Authority will then also act as the conduit for the relevant information to be circulated from the EU to the relevant implementing divisions within the Department.

The Managing Authority will also be the conduit for any queries in relation to the regulatory requirement which require clarification with the EU Commission. In this way, a clear channel of communication will be maintained which will help to ensure that the integrity of the flow of information in relation to regulatory requirements is maintained. As part of this role, it is also intended that the Managing Authority will organise information seminars for implementing divisions as the RDP measures are rolled out. These seminars will ensure that key staff are aware of the regulatory and reporting requirements attached to RDP funding.

As part of the design process for the RDP, a coordinating committee was established. This committee was chaired by the Managing Authority and drew together all the line divisions involved in RDP design. This committee will remain in place to support the implementation phase of the new RDP, and this will act as a further channel to ensure consistency of information in relation to regulatory requirements.

Given that the Managing Authority and the Paying Agency for the EAFRD both are situated within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, there is a clear opportunity to ensure that they share a common understanding in relation to the regulatory requirements arising out of the EAFRD. The Managing Authority and Paying Agency are as a matter of course in ongoing contact, and have put in place a standing meeting between the two at regular intervals to ensure that there is a shared clarity in relation to regulatory requirements.

In relation to LEADER elements of the RDP, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government is a delegated Paying Agency. In order to maintain the consistency of information flow, the

Managing Authority will also act as the conduit for any information relating to regulatory requirements as they apply to LEADER measures. Regular standing meetings are also in place with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to ensure a shared understanding of regulatory requirements. As part of the roll out of RDP measures, a central communications plan will be developed which will include information in relation to core regulatory requirements for beneficiaries. As a matter of course during the previous programming periods, implementing divisions undertook a range of actions to ensure that there was clarity of information for beneficiaries in relation to the regulatory requirements attached to EAFRD funding. These actions included the provision of clear but detailed terms and conditions for beneficiaries (via the Department's local office network, standard post, and on line), the regular briefing of agricultural advisors to ensure the provision of accurate regulatory information to their clients, the organisation of road shows to coincide with measure launches and to provide an opportunity for one on one interaction with beneficiaries in relation to regulatory requirements, and the provision of specific regulatory information at specified times via the farming press. It is intended that these actions will continue to be delivered in the 2014-2020 period as the need arises.

In summation, a range of activities are either planned or are already underway which are relevant to ensuring a sufficient advisory capacity on regulatory requirements, including

- Planned internal DAFM seminars in relation to the role of the Managing Authority and Paying Agency, and the duties and responsibilities of divisions dealing with EU funding.
- Follow up support from the Managing Authority for all line divisions in relation to monitoring and evaluation and data requirements
- Provision of internal information portal for line divisions where guidance documents and fiches and relevant EU regulations are available.
- Provision of financial management guidance material for line divisions
- Circulation of relevant information by the Managing Authority and Paying Agency from relevant EU meetings etc
- Provision of information to beneficiaries is already underway via RDP presence at Ploughing Championships in September 2014, the publication of a booklet on draft measures, and the series of information seminars for commonage farmers held by DAFM.
- Launch of measures will be accompanied by appropriate press material and provision of information for relevant actors and beneficiaries.

One of the key focuses of this RDP is the need to promote more environmentally sustainable practices. This in turn creates a need for sufficient advisory capacity and other support mechanisms to be in place in relation to environmental, biodiversity and climate change issues. These supports will play a key role in ensuring the effective implementation of RDP measures. In this regard, the following arrangements are of particular relevance:

- There is a cohort of professional agricultural advisors in the sector. At the time of writing, there were some 570 Farm Advisory Service (FAS) registered advisors, with this number expected to rise to 850 on foot of upcoming training. There is also a cohort of advisors with NFQ Level 8 qualifications but who are not FAS registered. This advisory service is provided both via Teagasc and private sector providers. These advisors provide advice on a range of issues for farmers, including on environmental, biodiversity and climate change issues.
- In recognition of the role that these advisors play, DAFM has rolled out extensive training for advisors with a particular focus on the new CAP requirements. This has included GLAS specific training on commonages, all aspects of cross compliance, and issues associated with Greening.
- As part of the RDP design process, DAFM has engaged in ongoing consultations with agricultural advisors (Teagasc and the private sector professional representative bodies).

- This approach has been complemented by the provision of Continued Professional Development (CPD) for advisors under Measure 2 of this RDP. The CPD will ensure that the advisors' role in supporting RDP implementation is strengthened by their continued up skilling. This will incorporate up skilling in relation to environmental issues.
- Finally, in planning the roll out of the new CAP, care has been taken to schedule the launch of measures to ensure that the overlap between measures where advisory capacity is required is minimised.

Building on the advisory services available to farmers, there are also a number of other supports in place by way of professional services which will help to underpin the successful implementation of the RDP. For example:

- The provision for Knowledge Transfer Groups under Measure 1 of this RDP will also feed into the successful realisation of the environmental aims of the RDP. The provision of one to one time for the farmer with the knowledge provider in preparing Farm Improvement Plans (FIP) will allow the development of key tools such as a carbon navigator/sustainability plan while also allowing a farmer's FIP to be specifically tailored to the specific environmental issues which apply on his/her farm.
- All applications for GLAS must be prepared by a trained GLAS advisor, while some of the actions for which aid is available under that measure require further specific input by trained professionals in the preparation of sustainable management plans for Natura land and for Commonages. Further targeted training will be delivered to GLAS participants, including demonstration trips, and it will be mandatory for all GLAS participants to attend these.
- Similarly, mandatory training will be in place for participants in Measure 10 (Beef Data and Genomics) to ensure that the necessary knowledge base is in place to ensure delivery of the environmental benefits being targeted in this Measure.
- While the work plan for the National Rural Network is currently being designed, it is envisaged that it will also have a role to play here via the establishment of specific sub networks to support, for example, organic farmers.

Innovation

As set out in this document, knowledge transfer and innovation are themes which are integrated throughout the RDP. In order to ensure a coordinated approach to this issue, a knowledge transfer and innovation unit has been set up within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. This unit will oversee the delivery of the specific knowledge transfer measures (i.e. Knowledge Transfer Groups, EIP operational groups and Continued Professional Development for Advisors). The unit will also serve to ensure that the theme of innovation is implemented in a strategic and consistent manner across RDP measures. For example, the unit's role will include ensuring that the innovation element of EIP operational groups or Knowledge Transfer groups is linked to the development of measures such as GLAS.

As part of the preparatory work for the RDP, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine undertook an informal review of the National Rural Network function as it operated across Member States in the previous RDP period. The objective of this review was to examine key lessons that could be taken from the previous RDP period and to identify elements of best practice that could be usefully incorporated into the National Network Function for the 2014-2020 RDP period in Ireland. Arising from this process, it

is intended to include a function for the new National Rural Network in relation to providing a supporting network for innovation measures. This may link in particular to the dissemination of outcomes from measures such as the EIP operational groups, but it is expected that a wider innovation role will be incorporated.

One of the characteristics of the LEADER element of the RDP is that the interventions funded through LEADER are often inherently innovative. Their innovation lies in the way they address the challenges presented in a local context as many ideas that are presented as innovative locally are very specific to the challenge that they address. Innovation is a natural element of the LEADER methodology and it is envisaged that the flexibility presented in the LEADER programme for the 2014-2020 as well as the integrated way in which LEADER interventions will become part of sub-regional planning will facilitate more innovative approaches to challenges in rural communities.

6. ASSESSMENT OF THE EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

6.1. Additional information

Not applicable. As referenced in the table above.

6.2. Ex-ante conditionalities

Applicable ex-ante conditionality at national level	Applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled: Yes/No/Partially	Assessment of its fulfilment	Priorities/Focus Areas	Measures
G1) Anti-Discrimination: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		
G2) Gender Equality: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		
G3) Disability: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		
G4) Public Procurement: the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.	P4, 3B, 6B, 2A, 5D	M16, M19, M02
G5) State Aid: the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.	6B	M19
G6) Environmental legislation relating to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.	P4, 5E, 5D, 5B, 5C, 5A	M10, M11, M13
G7) Statistical systems and result indicators: the existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.	P4, 3B, 5A, 5B, 1A, 1C, 6B, 5C, 5D, 1B, 5E, 2B, 2A	M13, M11, M16, M04, M19, M01, M10, M02

P4.1) Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC): standards for good agricultural and environmental condition of land referred to in Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 are established at national level	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		M11, M10
P4.2) Minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products: minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products referred to in Article 28 of Chapter I of Title III of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 are defined at national level	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		M10, M11
P4.3) Other relevant national standards: relevant mandatory national standards are defined for the purpose of Article 28 of Chapter I of Title III of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled		M11, M10
P5.1) Energy efficiency: actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled.		

Applicable ex-ante conditionality at national level	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference (if fulfilled) [reference to the strategies, legal acts or other relevant documents]	Assessment of its fulfilment
G1) Anti-Discrimination: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	G1.a) Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund related activities.	Yes	DAFM has invited input from the bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons, both as part of the extensive consultation process and through membership of the successive RDP Monitoring Committees. There is also a Disability Liaison officer within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G1.b) Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti discrimination law and policy.	Yes	DAFM conducted an extensive training programme on Equality and Diversity which covered Anti-discrimination and Gender Equality. This training is also part of induction course for newly recruited staff.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
G2) Gender Equality: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	G2.a) Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund related activities.	Yes	DAFM has invited input from the bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons, both as part of the extensive consultation process and through membership of the successive RDP Monitoring Committees. There is also a Disability Liaison officer within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G2.b) Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.	Yes	DAFM conducted an extensive training programme on Equality and Diversity which covered Anti-discrimination and Gender Equality. This training is also part of induction course for newly recruited staff.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
G3) Disability: the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC	G3.a) Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.	Yes	DAFM has invited input from the bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons, both as part of the extensive consultation process and through membership of the successive RDP Monitoring Committees. There is also a Disability Liaison officer within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G3.b) Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate.	Yes	DAFM conducted an extensive training programme on Equality and Diversity which covered Anti-discrimination and Gender Equality. This training is also part of induction course for newly recruited staff. DAFM has also appointed Access Officers in accordance with section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005. Access Officers are responsible for providing or arranging for, and co-ordinating assistance and guidance, to persons with disabilities accessing services provided by the offices and generally to act as a point of contact for people with disabilities wishing to access such services.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G3.c) Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the	Yes	The National Disability Authority (NDA), as the independent statutory body provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. Their role is to assist the Minister for Justice and Equality in the co-ordination of disability policy. Their policy advice spans the range of areas covered in the National Disability Strategy and in the UN Convention on the Rights of	This conditionality has been fulfilled.

	preparation and the implementation of the programmes.		Persons with Disabilities, including disability services and supports, employment, transport, social welfare, housing, health, the justice system, independent living and social inclusion. DAFM liaises with the NDA as required and the NDA will be invited to participate in the RDP Monitoring Committee.	fulfilled.
G4) Public Procurement: the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	G4.a) Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms.	Yes	While EU public procurement laws constitute applicable Union law for interventions planned under the RDP, additional National legislation is detailed below[1] and includes the Public Sector Procurement Regulations 2006, the European Communities (Award of Contracts by utility undertakings) Regulation 2007, and the National Procurement Policy Framework, inter alia. [1] Statutory Instrument No. 329 of 2006 “European Communities (Award of Public Authorities’ Contracts) Regulations 2006” http://www.etenders.gov.ie/policyandlegislation	This conditionality has been fulfilled
	G4.b) Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures.	Yes	Arrangements are in place to ensure that appropriate public procurement rules are applied and that there is adherence to the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency. Procedures include the appropriate publication of transparent selection and award criteria in any call for tenders and the communication of relevant Treaty principles and procurement rules to staff involved in the implementation of the RDP.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G4.c) Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	Within DAFM, the Central Procurement Unit (CPU) disseminates policy circulars, guidelines and advice on all aspects of procurement to line divisions. The CPU has also organised an information seminar for purchasing divisions. The Paying Agency procedures manuals which set out specific rules on public procurement and this information has been circulated to all staff. The CPU has also facilitated training for divisions from the Chief State Solicitor’s Office.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G4.d) Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	Yes	Relevant material to assist line divisions is also available via the DAFM intranet. The CPU also has a role in scrutinising tenders drafted by the purchasing units before they issue, suggesting changes for improved outcomes and ensuring compliance with legal requirements in tender documents. It is also relevant that there the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has recently been established in alignment with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Once the OGP is fully resourced and has fully engaged with all departments/agencies, the sourcing and tendering function will be transferred to the OGP, i.e. the tendering process for services/suppliers under the RDP will at some stage migrate to the OGP. The LEADER element of the RDP has experienced and applied significant learning in the context of public procurement during the 2007-2013 period which is reflected in the operating rules that govern the current programme. This learning will also be applied and developed in this programme period. DECLG remain committed to supporting LAGS and will provide capacity building and training initiatives to maintain and ensure high standards when it comes to all issues of public procurement related to the delivery of LEADER interventions.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
G5) State Aid: the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	G5.a) Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	The EU State Aid rules constitute applicable Union law for interventions planned under the RDP. The Rural Development Regulation (Articles 81 and 82) sets out the position in relation to the application of these rules to rural development expenditure by Member States, including in relation to additional national financing during the programming period. This conditionality has been fulfilled. Arrangements are in place to ensure application and implementation of EU State Aid rules via a well-established notification and approval process.	This conditionality has been fulfilled

	G5.b) Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	In DAFM there is a dedicated section within EU Division that provides advice and assistance, based on advice from the Commission and from previous state aid experience, to ensure that schemes operated by DAFM and its agencies comply with applicable State Aid rules. This provision of advice is also facilitated and supported by the DAFM Legal Division. The Irish Authorities are represented on the Advisory Committee on State Aid of the Directorate-General of Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission where the latest developments in State Aid regulations are discussed and all presentations are disseminated to line divisions with responsibility for the operation of the various schemes. The Irish authorities are in ongoing contact with the Commission on any issues that might arise regarding implementation of State Aid rules. The Irish authorities further comply with the provisions of the Agriculture State Aid regulations by completing annual scheme expenditure reports on the State Aid Reporting Interactive system (SARI).	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G5.c) Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	The dedicated section within DAFM ensures that all relevant sections are involved in consultations on the review of the State Aid rules, that legal advice is sought when necessary and that any issue requiring legal clarity or certainty is raised directly with the Commission. Training courses are also provided and relevant staff are kept informed of development by way of office notices and circulars. DECLG ensures that all entities involved in the delivery of LEADER interventions are fully cognisant of the rules regarding State Aid and this will continue in the 2014-2020 period. The operating rules for LEADER 2007-2013 contain guidance regarding State Aid implications and DECLG will support future LAGs to comply with relevant State Aid requirements through capacity building/training and the provision of comprehensive guidance as part of the operating rules for the 2014-2020 period.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
G6) Environmental legislation relating to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): the existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	G6.a) Arrangements for the effective application of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (EIA) and of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (SEA);	Yes	This conditionality has been fulfilled. EIA (Agriculture) regulations (SI 456/2011)[1] provide the basis for the effective application of Union environmental legislation in this area. Under these regulations, DAFM has an EIA Screening and Consent system in place for certain farm restructuring works. [1] http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/ruralenvironment/environment/environmentalimpactassessment/SI456of2011200911.pdf	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G6.b) Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives.	Yes	An Inspectors' Procedures Manual has been produced, and DAFM inspectors - who have been authorised by Ministerial Order - have received appropriate training, which is ongoing, as required. Administrative staff who are administering the system in DAFM have also received training.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G6.c) Arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity.	Yes	In addition to the training for inspectors, DAFM implements the Government's Workforce Planning Initiative in order to forecast resource demands in the context of current and emerging business demands.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
G7) Statistical systems and result indicators: the existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	G7.a) Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process..	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G7.b) Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process. The evaluation systems will also be kept under review and managed by the RDP Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group within DAFM (as referenced in Section 9).	This conditionality has been fulfilled.

	G7.c) An effective system of result indicators including: the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process. The evaluation systems will also be kept under review and managed by the RDP Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G7.d) An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process. The evaluation systems will also be kept under review and managed by the RDP Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G7.e) An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System.. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process. The evaluation systems will also be kept under review and managed by the Evaluation sub-committee within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	G7.f) Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators	Yes	This conditionality is fulfilled through the Common Monitoring and Evaluation System.. The requirements for statistical reporting and evaluation have been integrated into the measure design process. The evaluation systems will also be kept under review and managed by the Evaluation sub-committee within DAFM.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
P4.1) Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC): standards for good agricultural and environmental condition of land referred to in Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 are established at national level	P4.1.a) GAEC standards are defined in national law and specified in the programmes	Yes	The criterion for fulfilment of this conditionality is that GAEC standards are defined in national law [1] and specified in the programme. This conditionality has been fulfilled. National GAEC legislation is in place through various measures. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with 1% inspection requirement. [2] [1] Wildlife Acts 1976 & 2000, Forestry Act 1946, Statutory Instrument 291/1985, Statutory Instrument 94/1997, Statutory Instrument 610/2010, National Monuments (Amendments) Act 2004, Noxious Weeds Act 1936, Single Payment Scheme terms [2] http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/crosscompliance/	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
P4.2) Minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products: minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products referred to in Article 28 of Chapter I of Title III of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 are defined at national level	P4.2.a) Minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products referred to in Chapter I of Title III of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 are specified in the programmes;	Yes	The criterion for fulfilment of this conditionality is that minimum requirements for fertiliser and plant protection products referred to in Chapter 1 of Title III of the Rural Development Regulation are specified in the programme. This conditionality has been fulfilled. National measures are in place that give effect to EU rules on the marketing of fertilisers. [1] Further detail on specific scheme requirements in this regards are laid down in Chapter 8. [1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2005/en/si/0384.html http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1978/en/si/0248.html http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/si/0048.html http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1955/en/act/pub/0008/index.html	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
P4.3) Other relevant national standards: relevant mandatory national standards are defined for the purpose of Article 28 of Chapter I of Title III of Regulation (EU) No	P4.3.a) Relevant mandatory national standards are specified in the programmes	Yes	The criterion for fulfilment of this conditionality is that relevant mandatory standards are specified in the programme. This conditionality has been fulfilled.	This conditionality has been fulfilled.

1305/2013			<p>National measures and a national Nitrates Action Programme are in place under the joint responsibility of DAFM & DECLG. [1] National measures and a National Action Plan on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides are in place. [2] Further detail on specific scheme requirements in this regards are laid down in Chapter 8.</p> <p>[1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2014/en.si.2014.0031.pdf[2] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2011/en/si/0310.html</p> <p>http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2012/en/si/0155.html</p> <p>http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2012/en/si/0159.html</p> <p>http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/Docs/National%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20sustainable%20use%20of%20pesticides.pdf</p>	
P5.1) Energy efficiency: actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	P5.1.a) Measures to ensure minimum requirements are in place related to the energy performance of buildings consistent with Articles 3, 4 and 5 of Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and the Council;	Yes	<p>This conditionality has been fulfilled. The Energy Efficiency Directive was transposed in 2014, in Statutory Instrument 131/2014. [1]High-level goals are set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.[2]</p> <p>Ireland has had a national energy efficiency target in place since 2009 - 20% energy savings by 2020, and 33% reduction in public sector energy use. Also, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, on behalf of the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources, has developed a National Energy Services Framework to help develop the energy efficiency market in the non-domestic sector, including through energy performance contracting.</p> <p>[1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0131.html</p> <p>[2] http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/B18E125F-66B1-4715-9B72-70F0284AEE42/0/2013_0206_NEEAP_PublishedversionforWeb.pdf</p>	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	P5.1.b) Measures necessary to establish a system of certification of the energy performance of buildings consistent with Article 11 of Directive 2010/31/EU;	Yes	<p>This conditionality has been fulfilled. The EU Energy Performance of Buildings Regulation 2012 was transposed in to Irish Law by Statutory Instrument 243 of 2012 and The Energy Efficiency Directive was transposed in 2014 by Statutory Instrument 131/2014. [1]High-level goals are set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.[2]</p> <p>Ireland has had a national energy efficiency target in place since 2009 - 20% energy savings by 2020, and 33% reduction in public sector energy use. Also, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, on behalf of the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources, has developed a National Energy Services Framework to help develop the energy efficiency market in the non-domestic sector, including through energy performance contracting.</p> <p>[1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2012/en.si.2012.0243.pdf</p> <p>http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0131.html</p> <p>[2] http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/B18E125F-66B1-4715-9B72-70F0284AEE42/0/2013_0206_NEEAP_PublishedversionforWeb.pdf</p>	This conditionality has been fulfilled.
	P5.1.c) Measures to ensure strategic planning on energy efficiency, consistent with Article 3 of Directive 2012/27 EU of the European Parliament and the Council;	Yes	<p>This conditionality has been fulfilled.</p> <p>The Energy Efficiency Directive was transposed in 2014, in Statutory Instrument 131/2014. [1]High-level goals are set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.[2]</p>	This conditionality has been fulfilled.

			<p>[1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0131.html</p> <p>[2] http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/B18E125F-66B1-4715-9B72-70F0284AEE42/0/2013_0206_NEEAP_PublishedversionforWeb.pdf</p>	
	<p>P5.1.d) Measures consistent with Article 13 of Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on energy end use efficiency and energy services to ensure the provision to final customers of individual meters in so far as it is technically possible, financially reasonable and proportionate in relation to the potential energy savings.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>This conditionality has been fulfilled. The Energy Efficiency Directive was transposed in 2014, in Statutory Instrument 131/2014. [1]High-level goals are set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.[2]</p> <p>[1] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0131.html</p> <p>[2] http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/B18E125F-66B1-4715-9B72-70F0284AEE42/0/2013_0206_NEEAP_PublishedversionforWeb.pdf</p>	<p>This conditionality has been fulfilled.</p>

6.2.1. List of actions to be taken for general ex-ante conditionalities

Applicable ex-ante conditionality at national level	Criteria Not Fulfilled	Action to be taken	Deadline	Bodies responsible for fulfillment
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6.2.2. List of actions to be taken for priority linked ex-ante conditionalities

Applicable ex-ante conditionality at national level	Criteria Not Fulfilled	Action to be taken	Deadline	Bodies responsible for fulfillment
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7. DESCRIPTION OF THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

7.1. Indicators

Priority	Applicable	Indicator and measurement unit, where appropriate	Target 2023 (a)	Adjustment top ups (b)	Milestone 2018 % (c)	Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c
P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests	X	Total Public Expenditure P2 (EUR)	291,500,000.00		32.02%	93,338,300.00
	X	Number of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investment in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A) + holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investment for young farmers (focus area 2B)	16,750.00		30%	5,025.00
P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture		Number of agricultural holdings participating in risk management schemes (focus area 3B)				
	X	Total Public Expenditure P3 (EUR)	56,000,000.00		41.07%	22,999,200.00
		Number of supported agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets/short supply				

		circuits, and producer groups (focus area 3A)				
P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry	X	Total Public Expenditure P4 (EUR)	2,873,000,630.00	3,170,000.00	56.03%	1,607,966,101.99
	X	Agricultural land under management contracts contributing to biodiversity (ha) (focus area 4A) + improving water management (ha) (focus area 4B) + improving soil management and/preventing soil erosion (ha) (focus area 4C)	1,494,689.00		95.76%	1,431,314.19
P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors	X	Agricultural and forest land under management to foster carbon sequestration/conservation (ha) (focus area 5E) + Agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHG and/or ammonia emissions (ha) (focus area 5D) + Irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system (ha) (focus area 5A)	556,875.00		66.33%	369,375.19
	X	Total Public Expenditure P5 (EUR)	439,000,000.00		60.85%	267,131,500.00

	X	Number of investment operations in energy savings and efficiency (focus area 5B) + in renewable energy production (focus area 5C)	400.00		30%	120.00
P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	X	Total Public Expenditure P6 (EUR)	250,000,000.00		44%	110,000,000.00
		Number of operations supported to improve basic services and infrastructures in rural areas (focus areas 6B and 6C)				
	X	Population covered by LAG (focus area 6B)	2,470,308.00		100%	2,470,308.00

7.1.1. P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests

7.1.1.1. Total Public Expenditure P2 (EUR)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 291,500,000.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 32.02%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 93,338,300.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

For various measures programmed under priority 2 (Knowledge Transfer Groups, CPD, EIP) it is expected that half of the expenditure will be realised by the end of 2018. However, that is not the case for TAMS. Experience of past capital investment schemes has shown that they can be slower to get started initially and that expenditure can lag behind approvals for beneficiaries. For example, in some instances planning permission may be required prior to applications for investment. Therefore, overall for priority 2, total expenditure by the end of 2018 is expected to be around 32% of the overall end of RDP target.

7.1.1.2. Number of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investment in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A) + holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investment for young farmers (focus area 2B)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 16,750.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 30%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 5,025.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

In total 5,025 holdings under TAMS II are expected to be supported by the end of 2018 for priority 2. This comprises 3,825 holdings under TAMS II in general and 1,200 that are forecast under the Young Farmer's strand of TAMS II. Overall this accounts for 30% of the holdings that will be supported by the end of the RDP. As noted above, the experience of past capital investment schemes has shown that there can be initial delays before they are up and running at full capacity.

7.1.2. P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

7.1.2.1. Number of agricultural holdings participating in risk management schemes (focus area 3B)

Applicable: No

Target 2023 (a): 0.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c):

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 0.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

This indicator is not included in the RDP 2014-2010 for Ireland, as those particular measures will not be supported.

7.1.2.2. Total Public Expenditure P3 (EUR)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 56,000,000.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 41.07%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 22,999,200.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

Under priority 3 in relation to the Knowledge Transfer Groups and the Animal Health and Welfare Advisory measure it is expected that half of the expenditure will be realised by the end of 2018. The other component under priority 3 is the Animal Welfare, Handling and Safety strand within TAMS. 30% of this expenditure is expected to have occurred by the end of 2018.

7.1.2.3. Number of supported agricultural holdings receiving support for participating in quality schemes, local markets/short supply circuits, and producer groups (focus area 3A)

Applicable: No

Target 2023 (a): 0.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c):

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 0.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

This indicator is not included in the RDP 2014-2010 for Ireland, as those particular measures will not be supported.

7.1.3. P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

7.1.3.1. Total Public Expenditure P4 (EUR)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 2,873,000,630.00

Adjustment top ups (b): 3,170,000.00

Milestone 2018 % (c): 56.03%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 1,607,966,101.99

Justification for the milestone setting:

In relation to priority 4 around 56% of the total public expenditure is forecast as being spent by the end of 2018. One of the major measures under priority four, Areas of Natural Constraints, is expected to stay constant in expenditure terms over the years. Some of the other measures, such as CPD, Article 35 co-operation measures, the Organic Farming scheme and Knowledge Transfer Groups are expected to have half of their total expenditure by the end of 2018. The Farm Nutrient element within TAMS II, which will impact upon water quality, is expected to attain around one third of its total expenditure by the end of 2018. In its initial year(s) it may be focussed upon tillage framers as a priority, and uptake may be higher in later years once that restriction is broadened out. Just over 60% of the expenditure under GLAS is forecast to be realised by the end of 2018, as it is a key component of the RDP. This may include some of the transitional expenditure in the RDP under ANCs, REPS and AEOS.

7.1.3.2. Agricultural land under management contracts contributing to biodiversity (ha) (focus area 4A) + improving water management (ha) (focus area 4B) + improving soil management and/preventing soil erosion (ha) (focus area 4C)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 1,494,689.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 95.76%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 1,431,314.19

Justification for the milestone setting:

Within the GLAS scheme it is envisaged that some 1.25 million hectares will be supported for the achievement of environmental objectives. In the indicator plan this is broken down into: more than 970,000 hectares for biodiversity, 980,000 hectares for water management and 840,000 hectares in relation to soil management., although some areas count towards more than one target. Since it is anticipated that the maximum number of 50,000 participants in GLAS would be recruited into the scheme by the end 2018, the end of 2018 and end RDP values are the same in terms of the area supported under management contracts.

Detailed maps and files received from organisations such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency assisted in the identification of farms in areas where the environmental priorities are, such as High status water areas and Natura 2000 sites. When combined with the extrapolation of evidence of the uptake of options under previous agri-environmental schemes, such as REPS and AEOS, this has helped to shape the expectations for the varying options under GLAS and provide a detailed and solid evidence base for these forecasts.

The Organic Farming Scheme, which is also relevant here, will develop further from the end of 2018 towards the end of the RDP in terms of the area under conversion to organic farming and also the area being maintained under organic farming.

7.1.4. P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors

7.1.4.1. Agricultural and forest land under management to foster carbon sequestration/conservation (ha) (focus area 5E) + Agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHG and/or ammonia emissions (ha) (focus area 5D) + Irrigated land switching to more efficient irrigation system (ha) (focus area 5A)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 556,875.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 66.33%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 369,375.19

Justification for the milestone setting:

Various measures are being programmed to meet some of these focus areas, including low emissions slurry spreading equipment under TAMS II, Knowledge Transfer Groups, EIP and CPD. However, these are not area based measures under an agri-environment and climate measure.

While certain actions under GLAS are seen as being directly relevant to carbon sequestration and focus area 5E, by and large these are related to hedgerows (coppicing, laying and planting) and as such are monitored on a linear metre basis, and not an area basis. Traditional orchards are measured in units. However, these actions have been converted into area equivalents.

The actions under GLAS that are primarily considered relevant to focus area 5D, reducing GHG and ammonia emissions, include low emission slurry spreading, creation of new habitats, environmental management of fallow land, heritage buildings and low input permanent pasture. These actions can mostly be measured on an area basis, in terms of hectares. As with the expenditure under GLAS, the total area of 163,490 hectares forecast for the end of the RDP also serves as the milestone to be achieved by the end of 2018. This is also based on the assumption that by the end of 2018 the maximum number of 50,000 participants in GLAS would be recruited into the scheme.

However, for the BDGP half of the overall area of 375,000 hectares is assumed to be supported by the end of 2018.

7.1.4.2. Total Public Expenditure P5 (EUR)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 439,000,000.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 60.85%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 267,131,500.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

In relation to certain measures under this priority it is expected that half of the expenditure will be incurred by the end of 2018. This is the case in relation to Knowledge Transfer Groups, EIP and CPD. The two relevant components within TAMS II are the pig and poultry investments and the low emissions slurry spreading equipment. Combined these two components are anticipated to achieve expenditure of 30% by the end of 2018. It is believed that the low emissions slurry spreading equipment will initially spend at a lower rate than the pig and poultry energy investments.

Selected actions under GLAS which are being programmed under Focus area 5D (reducing GHG and ammonia emissions) are expected to have realised 64% of expenditure by the end of 2018.

7.1.4.3. Number of investment operations in energy savings and efficiency (focus area 5B) + in renewable energy production (focus area 5C)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 400.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 30%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 120.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

The energy efficiency measures for pig and poultry farmers under TAMS II are expected to have achieved 30% of their completion by the end of 2018. Again this is the same as for the expected pattern for TAMS II in general.

7.1.5. P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

7.1.5.1. Total Public Expenditure P6 (EUR)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 250,000,000.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 44%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 110,000,000.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

In relation to priority 6, €110 million in expenditure is envisaged by the end of 2018, which is equivalent to 44% of the overall LEADER allocation of €250 million (including €15 million for two food measures). The expenditure pattern that took place for LEADER under the 2007-2013 RDP was analysed, and it was found that expenditure increased on a year on year basis from a relatively low initial base. LEADER was slower to start expenditure initially due to the necessary formation of LAGs and their preparation. A similar pattern is anticipated for the 2014-2020 RDP, given the requirement for the preparation of Local Development Strategies for example.

7.1.5.2. Number of operations supported to improve basic services and infrastructures in rural areas (focus areas 6B and 6C)

Applicable: No

Target 2023 (a): 0.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c):

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 0.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

This indicator is not included in the RDP 2014-2010 for Ireland, as those particular measures will not be supported.

7.1.5.3. Population covered by LAG (focus area 6B)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 2,470,308.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 100%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 2,470,308.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

It is currently anticipated that a rural population of some 2.5 million persons will be covered by a LAG and potentially be able to benefit through applying for LEADER funding and projects.

7.2. Alternative indicators

Priority	Applicable	Indicator and measurement unit, where appropriate	Target 2023 (a)	Adjustment top ups (b)	Milestone 2018 % (c)	Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c
P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture	X	Overall number of Participants in Knowledge Transfer Groups (measure 1)	26,600.00		50%	13,300.00
P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry	X	Total Area of Support under Priority 4 for Measure 10 (GLAS) and Measure 13 (ANCs)	4,662,809.00		100%	4,662,809.00
P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	X	Number of Operations supported to improve basic services through LEADER (measure 19)	2,000.00		44%	880.00

7.2.1. P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

7.2.1.1. Overall number of Participants in Knowledge Transfer Groups (measure 1)

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 26,600.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 50%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 13,300.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

Half of those trained under Knowledge Transfer Groups are expected to be trained by the end of 2018.

7.2.2. P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

7.2.2.1. *Total Area of Support under Priority 4 for Measure 10 (GLAS) and Measure 13 (ANCs)*

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 4,662,809.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 100%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 4,662,809.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

The area supported under GLAS (measure 10) and ANCs (measure 13) has been included here. Both of these measures are expected to have maximum participation in area terms by the end of 2018.

7.2.3. P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

7.2.3.1. *Number of Operations supported to improve basic services through LEADER (measure 19)*

Applicable: Yes

Target 2023 (a): 2,000.00

Adjustment top ups (b):

Milestone 2018 % (c): 44%

Milestone absolute value (a-b)*c: 880.00

Justification for the milestone setting:

44% of the overall LEADER allocation is expected by the end of 2018. A similar pattern is expected for operations supported to improve basic services.

7.3. Reserve

Priority	Total union contribution planned (€)	Total union contribution planned (€) subject to the performance reserve	Performance reserve (€)	Min performance reserve (Min 5%)	Max performance reserve (Max 7%)	Performance reserve rate
P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests	161,545,000.00	162,141,744.90	9,721,210.77	8,107,087.24	11,349,922.14	6%
P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture	29,680,000.00	29,180,395.24	1,780,092.28	1,459,019.76	2,042,627.67	6.1%
P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry	1,590,409,153.00	1,596,284,101.44	95,769,664.09	79,814,205.07	111,739,887.10	6%
P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors	243,898,000.00	244,798,955.69	14,680,638.34	12,239,947.78	17,135,926.90	6%
P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas	157,000,000.00	157,579,955.73	9,447,503.70	7,878,997.79	11,030,596.90	6%

8. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURES SELECTED

8.1. Description of the general conditions applied to more than one measure including, when relevant, definition of rural area, baselines, cross-compliance, intended use of financial instruments, intended use of advances and common provisions for investments, including the provisions of Articles 45 and 46 of regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Definition of rural areas

Ireland has a much higher percentage of its territory and population living in rural areas relative to the EU-27 average. The significance of rural areas in Ireland is confirmed in published Commission data. However, because there is no single agreed definition of 'rural' as a concept, different definitions are used by different bodies.

For the purposes of its work, the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) defined rural Ireland as 'all areas located beyond the administrative boundaries of the five largest cities.' Therefore the term 'rural areas' was used to encompass open countryside, as well as small, medium and large towns. This is the definition adopted in the RDP.

Analysis carried out by Teagasc for the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, combining population criteria and socio/economic criteria, confirmed that considering a similar area for Local Development Strategies in the RDP was also appropriate.

Baselines / cross-compliance

Baseline and cross-compliance details can be found in the respective measure descriptions.

Intended use of financial instruments / advances

The option for beneficiaries of investment measures to receive an advance payment of up to 50% of aid assistance, as provided for in Article 45(4) of Regulation 1305/2013, is not included in the RDP. However, advances for Local Action Groups as per Article 42(2) are provided for.

Ireland will keep the possible use of financial instruments under review during the programming period. In particular, the possibility of formulating a Financial Instrument support in the dairy sector which would address key challenges related to planned post-quota expansion and price volatility will be explored by way of the required ex-ante evaluation. Any such measure would then be included in the RDP by way of Programme modification.

Common provisions for investment

With regard to Articles 45 & 46 on investments, the latter is not applicable because no irrigation measures are proposed in the draft RDP.

Under Article 45, investment operations likely to have negative environmental effects shall, where appropriate, be preceded by an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Environmental Protection Legislation

There are a number of environmental directives and international agreements that can potentially have linkages with the RDP. Where it is required to establish these in Irish law, there are also corresponding domestic enforcement regulations. The relevance and importance of these regulations is that many set the legal framework of environmental rules and requirements under Irish law within which rural development takes place. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Habitats Directive is implemented in Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011).
- The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) is implemented through a series of regulations, the most recent of which was the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No.31 of 2014).
- The Environmental Protection Agency (Industrial Emissions) (Licensing) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No. 137 of 2013) are part of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) licensing legislation implementing the EU Directive on the licensing of emissions.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment is implemented in Ireland through a range of regulations, including cross-cutting regulations on planning and development.
- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 456 of 2011) provide that farmland developments relating to ‘restructuring of rural holdings’, ‘commencing to use uncultivated land or semi-natural land for intensive agriculture’ and ‘land drainage works on land used for agriculture’ may be subject to EIA depending on their scale and location.
- Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Sustainable Use of Pesticides) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 155 of 2012).

Equivalence

Under Measure 10 it is possible to have a catch crop commitment under GLAS over a farmer’s entire arable

area (except temporary grassland) for the duration of the GLAS contract, with the GLAS payment being limited to 32 hectares. This commitment can serve to fulfil the crop diversification requirement under the greening legislation by way of equivalence as provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013. In line with Regulation 639/2014 a predetermined amount of one third of the estimated greening payment will be deducted from the farmer's GLAS payment to ensure that no double funding arises.

The catch crops must be sown by 15 September in each of the five years of the agri-environment commitment. The catch crops cover must remain in situ from the date of sowing to the 1st December annually. The catch crops must consist of at least two crops taken from those crops listed below. Additional species may also be considered eligible provided the objectives of the measure are met, including

Buckwheat
Phacelia
Crimson Clover
Rye
Tillage Radish
Mustard
Vetch
Oats (& Black Oats)
Leafy Turnip

A catch crop shall not be required to be sown on temporary grassland as such a practice would from an ecological and environmental point of view be problematic. This is due to the fact that one would be ploughing up and removing a crop already in place that prevents leaching of Nitrogen, prevents soil erosion, improves water filtration, increases organic matter and generally improves soil structure. These are all the benefits that catch crops offer. Temporary grassland will always be in the ground longer than a catch crop and would therefore be of greater benefit to the environment.

Greening and double funding

The premium for Organics is based on both additional costs and income foregone when compared to conventional farming practice. There is no specific payment for crop-rotation and in any case, the premium only partially compensates for the calculated loss.

Revision clauses for operations under certain Articles.

In line with Article 48 of Regulation 1305/2013, there is provision for revision clauses in relation to operations undertaken pursuant to Articles 28 (Measure 10) and 29 (Measure 11). This provides for

- Adjustment in the case of amendments to the relevant mandatory standards, requirements or obligations set out in Articles 28 and 29 beyond which commitments must go;
- Adjustments needed to avoid double funding of the practices referred to in Article 43 of 1307/2013 in the case of amendments to those practices; and
- The inclusion of a revision clause for operations under Articles 28 and 29 which extend beyond the current programming period in order to allow for their adjustment to the legal framework of the following programming period.

Active farmer

The definition of an active farmer used in this RDP is as notified to the Commission in accordance with Art. 9 of Reg. 1307/2013.

Minimum activity

No payment will be made with respect to the minimum activity as defined in accordance with Art. 4(1)(c)(iii) of Reg. 1307/2013.

8.2. Description by measure

8.2.1. M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)

8.2.1.1. Legal basis

Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.

Linked to Article 28 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.

8.2.1.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

The Knowledge Transfer measure is expected to contribute to the following Focus Areas:

- 2A - Economic performance, modernisation & restructuring
- 3B - Farm risk prevention & management
- 4A – Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas
- 4B – Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C – preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D - Reducing GHG & ammonia emissions.

This measure consists of

- Submeasure 1.1 – support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions – Knowledge Transfer Groups
- Submeasure 1.1 – support for vocational training and skills acquisition – training delivered in support of Measure 10 (GLAS and Beef Data and Genomics Programme)

While the logic underlying Measure 10 training is integrated with that Measure design, these training interventions are set out as separate submeasures here and the funding allocation will be allocated to Measure 1.

Knowledge Transfer Groups

Available evidence suggests that profitability levels on many Irish farms are under threat and that many farms, particularly in the beef sector, rely on direct payments and other subsidies to remain viable. Matters linked to production quality, input costs, meeting regulatory standards in the areas of environmental protection, animal welfare and health and breed improvement were identified as issues affecting the various sectors. The concept of Smart, Green Growth set out in Food Harvest 2020 encompasses the idea of enhancing knowledge transfer and the report recommends that primary producers be encouraged to optimise efficiency by adopting new technology and best commercial practice. Furthermore the RDP SWOT/Needs and stakeholder consultation process identified deficiencies in the knowledge base in areas such as business skills, environmental and climate change issues and animal health and welfare issues.

Increasing the knowledge base in the sector can contribute to increased efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness by addressing identified knowledge gaps in areas such as financial and risk management, grass management practices and animal health and welfare. Similarly, knowledge transfer in relation to environmental, bio-diversity and climate change issues will contribute to the development of a more sustainable sector. To ensure that these wide range of skills are delivered, DAFM is now implementing innovative delivery solutions that will go beyond the traditional approach followed in previous discussion groups and which will avail of additional expertise such as that of veterinary practitioners as appropriate.

The setting up of sectoral Knowledge Transfer Groups will see farmer meetings facilitated by highly qualified advisors and will involve the transfer and exchange of information and best practice. All participating farmers will also be required to develop a Farm Improvement Plan (FIP) in the initial year of participation and to update it in each of the 2nd and 3rd years of the scheme. This Plan will be developed in association with both the qualified facilitator and a qualified veterinary practitioner as appropriate.

Specific identified issues are integrated into the design of the measure both by ensuring that a greater level of expertise and technical knowledge is available at facilitator level and by ensuring a more targeted focus at knowledge transfer meetings. In this regard scheme design includes a more enhanced focus on environmental and climate change issues reflecting the multifunctional role of agriculture. This measure also takes into account the need for increased best practice and knowledge transfer in relation to environmental issues highlighted in the Environmental Impact Analysis of Food Harvest 2020.

Accordingly, the proposed Knowledge Transfer Groups will build on the progress made under previous discussion groups and enhance the level of knowledge transfer by incorporating a more output focused approach concentrating on priority areas as identified in the SWOT/Needs analyses and stakeholder consultation process.

Furthermore, by ensuring that horizontal issues, such as climate change and sustainability, are incorporated in the scheme design, Knowledge Transfer Groups will also have a significant role to play in the successful delivery of other proposed measures in the new RDP – eg Agri-Environment and Climate Change measures.

Knowledge Transfer Groups will also support the reduction of green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture as they will provide an ideal vehicle with which to roll out the Carbon Navigator on a country wide basis. The Carbon Navigator/Sustainability Plan developed by Teagasc and Bord Bia allows farmers to understand how their farms produce green house gas, identify mitigation capacity and set targets and a pathway to reduce emissions. Again, this will form part of the annual FIP where appropriate.

The Knowledge Transfer Groups will include a focus on supporting farm risk prevention and management as particular groups will include animal health and welfare issues together with wider elements of risk and financial management. This will be achieved by the innovative scheme design that makes it a compulsory requirement that all participants complete a FIP in collaboration with the Knowledge Transfer facilitator and a qualified veterinary practitioner where appropriate.

In order to allow qualified facilitators tailor the knowledge transfer meetings towards specific groups DAFM will not be prescriptive about the topics to be discussed at individual knowledge transfer meetings. Nonetheless, DAFM will prepare a schedule of recommended topics by sector from which a qualified facilitator will be able to select. While these suggested topics will attempt to cover a wide range of aspects of farming from profitability to herd health, qualified facilitators will not be limited to the recommended topics. General topics to be recommended for all groups include farm profitability, risk management, expansion and progression planning, collaborative farming and environmental sustainability. Recommended sector specific topics which will not be relevant to all groups include animal health and welfare, grassland management, milk quality issues and animal fertility and breeding

Specifically, it is expected that Knowledge Transfer Groups will:

- Encourage efficiency and effectiveness of work,
- Help farmers to deal with complex issues,
- Build capacity of individuals in a group environment,
- Ensure farmers engage in a process of continuous improvement,
- Encourage innovation and new ideas, and
- Enhance the delivery of other related measures proposed under the RDP.

Measure 10 Training

Training will be provided to approved beneficiaries of Measure 10 in order to optimise delivery of these schemes. The intervention logic, contribution to focus area and cross cutting objectives are as per Measure 10 for each type of training provided. The funding for the training is allocated to Measure 1.

8.2.1.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.1.3.1. Knowledge Transfer Groups

Sub-measure:

- 1.1 - support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions

8.2.1.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

All the Knowledge Transfer Groups will be run via call for proposals using a common administrative framework. The selection of the project proposals will be based on quality, transparency, equality of treatment and impartiality. The requirement that each participating farmer must complete a tailored Farm Improvement Plan will ensure that the time spent at the knowledge transfer meetings is supplemented by one-to-one contact between the farmer and his advisor and veterinary practitioner (where appropriate) for each year the farmer is participating in the scheme.

Knowledge Transfer Groups will focus on all aspects of a farm's performance including financial management, animal health and welfare, grass management, sustainability, breeding, health and safety and integrated pest management.

They will be delivered in the following sectors:

- Dairy,
- Beef,
- Sheep,
- Poultry,
- Tillage, and
- Equine.

Groups will run for a period of 3 years and to prevent double funding DAFM will prohibit farmers from participating in more than one group simultaneously. Each three year period will commence in the first

quarter of the year except in 2015 when, due to the timing of the approval of Ireland's Rural Development Programme, the commencement date will be later in the year.

Following the ranking and selection process successful facilitators (beneficiaries) will notify DAFM of the composition of each group they have been awarded. Each group will contain a maximum of 18 farmers (12 in the case of Poultry), except in exceptional circumstances to be specified and approved by DAFM. DAFM expects that the average group size will be 15 and 10 in the case of poultry.

DAFM will in turn validate each group and notify the facilitator that s/he may commence delivering the measure to approved groups. From that point facilitators will be authorised to commence holding knowledge transfer meetings and to start the process of developing individual FIPs.

The primary focus of the 2 hour Knowledge transfer meetings is to provide a suitable forum for learning to take place. To encourage flexibility and to allow the facilitator adapt to a group's specific needs there will be no prescribed format to individual meetings. Facilitators are trained to identify suitable topics to be introduced as part of discussion that will be of most benefit to individual groups at a specific point in time. This transfer of information will be facilitated by the trained advisor with a high level of interaction between advisors and farmers as appropriate. Ideally topics will be selected through an interactive process between the advisor and group participants. These topics will be selected in advance and will form part of an agenda set out by the advisor in advance of the meeting.

Beneficiary (Facilitator) Actions

For each approved group a facilitator will arrange knowledge transfer meetings for participating farmers with meeting topics to be selected from a menu of topics covering farm management issues. The menu of topics will be sector specific and will include areas such as grassland management, pest management, herd health, breeding, risk management, health and safety, progression planning and nutrient management.

Facilitators will also be required to prepare a Farm Improvement Plan in conjunction with each farmer in their approved group. This Plan must be updated in each of the years 2 and 3. The Plan will be sector specific and tailored for each individual farmer. It will be developed during one-to-one contact between the respective farmer and his facilitator and veterinary practitioner as appropriate.

Farmer Actions

Each participating farmer will be required to attend a minimum of 5 knowledge transfer meetings/DAFM accredited national events per year relevant to that sector. The knowledge transfer meetings will be run by the group's approved facilitator.

In addition each participating farmer will be required to prepare a FIP in association with his approved facilitator. Each FIP will be both sector specific and tailored to an individual farmers need. Depending on

the sector concerned it may include a Profit Monitor, a Machinery Cost Calculator, an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Survey, a Carbon Navigator/Sustainability Plan, a Grassland Management Plan, a Herd Health Plan and a Breeding Plan. The animal health and welfare element of the FIP must be completed in conjunction with a qualified veterinary practitioner.

Formation of Groups

Groups will be registered with the Department by facilitators on a dedicated IT system. Participants will be validated by the Department prior to the group being approved and any meetings taking place. It is intended that an expressions of interest process will be put in place and then facilitators who come through that process will identify groups in line with DAFM stipulations. Facilitators are required to hold a minimum of 5 meetings per year per group. Prior notice of these meetings will be recorded with the Department to facilitate controls. Such prior notice will allow the DAFM inspectorate to preselect meetings for inspection on a risk/random basis. The notification will be submitted to DAFM on a dedicated meeting notification system and will include details of the group that is meeting and both the meeting time and location.

8.2.1.3.1.2. Type of support

Support will be by way of an annual grant.

All payments in respect of eligible costs will be made in accordance with the requirements of Article 14 of Regulation 1305/2013.

8.2.1.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

Costs are in accordance with Article 67(5) of Reg (EU) 1303/2013.

8.2.1.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries will be the advisors/trainers. Under the scheme the eligible costs for the advisors/trainers and farmers are broken down and separately identified.

8.2.1.3.1.5. Eligible costs

Beneficiary (Facilitator)

Eligible costs are the facilitator costs associated with running the knowledge transfer meetings. This comprises the time it takes to prepare and run each knowledge transfer meeting. Also, the time it takes to prepare and update each FIP is included. Finally, the facilitators' administrative costs associated with operating a Knowledge Transfer Group are included.

Farmer

Each participating farmer is compensated for the time element (replacement farmer cost) and travel cost associated with attending knowledge transfer meetings/DAFM accredited national events. In addition, each farmer will also be compensated for the time element (replacement farmer cost) associated with the development of the FIP. While the farmer will engage a Veterinary Practitioner to assist in the development of the herd health aspect of the plan the veterinary costs incurred by the farmer will not be eligible under this measure. However, the farmer time taken to both prepare for this meeting and engage with the veterinary practitioner will be eligible.

8.2.1.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

DAFM will identify Knowledge Transfer Groups to be provided and set a maximum number of groups to be funded by sector. Course facilitators will apply to manage and facilitate groups provided they comply with the following basic eligibility criteria

- A minimum educational qualifications to Level 8 of the National Framework of Qualifications or another specified qualification deemed eligible by DAFM
- indemnity insurance up to €150,000.

8.2.1.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

The selection of the facilitators will be done based on pre-determined eligibility and ranking and selection criteria.

The opportunity to register eligibility as a facilitator will be advertised and will be made available through the DAFM's dedicated online portal. Subsequent calls for proposals will be advertised by the use of a publicity campaign in the national print media along with national information meetings. Calls for proposals will be issued annually with sectors to be decided based on DAFM policy priorities.

Only eligible facilitators will be put forward for ranking and selection. These criteria will be based on the quality of the individual proposals submitted and will ensure transparency, equality of treatment and impartiality.

The proposed online application process will entail eligible facilitators being ranked and selected based on clearly defined criteria that will include scoring where

- A facilitator has relevant qualifications in excess of NFQ level 8.
- A facilitator introduces additional relevant expertise (e.g. Accountant, Agronomist, Veterinary Surgeon).
- A facilitator includes in his approach a meeting to address Farm Progression Planning.
- Groups established to have greater than 10% new members

In effect, a 3 stage process is in place as regards eligibility and selection criteria

- **Stage 1** – this is an expression of interest stage for people who wish to facilitate knowledge transfer groups. Only beneficiaries fulfilling the eligibility requirements will be successful at this stage. All eligible beneficiaries will then be entered onto the DAFM database of Knowledge Transfer group facilitators.
- **Stage 2** – in order to rank and select beneficiaries, beneficiaries on the DAFM database will be asked to set out their proposals for Knowledge Transfer Groups. Each proposal will then be awarded marks based on the criteria set out above and ranked accordingly
- **Stage 3** – there are two steps here as facilitators move from their proposals for Knowledge Transfer Groups to actually establishing groups. Firstly, as beneficiaries are approved to set up groups, the first two elements of the selection criteria are checked – ie do they have the group composition and qualifications they set out in their proposal? A group will only be approved if it passes this check. Then, for the remaining two selection criteria (additional expertise and inclusion of a meeting on farm progression planning) it is not possible to check these prior to the running of a group. However, these two elements will be included in the inspection regime and linked to penalties for non compliance.

8.2.1.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support will be based on the eligible costs as set out above.

Each facilitator (beneficiary) will be paid an annual grant of €500 per participating farmer. While there will be a maximum of 18 members per group, or 12 in the case of Poultry (due to the size and structure of that sector), subject to DAFM approval to allow group size to exceed these maxima in exceptional circumstances, DAFM expects that the average group size will be 15 and 10 respectively. Accordingly the average facilitator grant per group per year is €7,500 or €5,000 in the case of poultry groups.

Each participating farmer will be paid an annual grant of €750.

Amounts to be paid are based on the estimated standard costs.

8.2.1.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.1.3.1.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

Implementation risks will arise from two sources namely facilitators (beneficiaries) and participating farmers.

With regard to facilitators (ie the beneficiaries) the identified risks include:

- Inability to competently facilitate knowledge transfer meetings. This includes a number of possibilities such as poor delivery, inability to ensure full participation and inappropriate or irrelevant topics.
- Failure to accurately record farmer attendance.
- Failure to oversee appropriate completion of FIP by individual farmers.
- Risks relating to the selection of beneficiaries (ie facilitators).

As regards participating farmers the risks include:

- Failure to attend the minimum required number of meetings/events.
- Failure to appropriately complete FIP.

There is also a risk of double funding linked to the possibility of farmers participating in more than one group concurrently. The scheme Terms and Conditions will specifically prohibit this and the Department's administration systems will identify potential breaches of this requirement.

8.2.1.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

The managing division will ensure that an appropriate control environment is in place coupled with a suitable penalty schedule. This control environment consists of a dual approach of administrative and on the spot checks.

The administrative checks will be carried out by the operating division and will involve desk checks and the use of internal and external databases. The on the spot checks are based on normal risk criteria and will involve professional staff from the Department's Agricultural Structures and Environment Division.

The penalty schedule comprises a proportionate deterrent against failure to comply and is based on the published EU Regulations. It is linked to each aspect of the scheme and comprises distinct penalties for both facilitators and participating farmers.

In relation to the selection of beneficiaries, a clear system has been put in place drawing on the relevant experience within DAFM to ensure that the selection of beneficiaries is managed effectively. This system is set out in Section 8.2.1.3.1.7.

Double funding is prevented by prohibiting farmers from participating in more than one group at the same time. DAFM databases will be used to verify compliance with this.

For the purposes of selecting candidates for control, a mixture of randomly selected cases and cases selected

by pre-determined risks will apply.

Controls will be carried out on:

1. facilitators - this will be achieved through a combination of meeting inspections and inspections of their completion of individual FIPs, and
2. participants – this will be achieved through the inspection of their attendance at meetings and their completion of their FIP.

At meetings penalties will be incurred by facilitators for the failure to accurately pre-register a meeting with the Department. Attendance record discrepancies will also incur penalties as will the failure to conduct a legitimate meeting. Penalties will be proportionate and will increase in cases of repetition. Facilitators will be inspected separately to assess the Farm Improvement Plans for the groups they manage. Irregularities will incur penalties up to and including suspension of payment to the facilitator and removal of their facilitator accreditation with the Department.

Facilitators who refuse to co-operate with an inspection or where it is determined that they are being deliberately deceptive or misleading in their dealings with the Department will see all of their payments withheld and the removal of their facilitator accreditation with the Department.

Administrative controls with regard to the return of attendance sheets, the correct registration of meetings and signature discrepancies will also be carried out. Penalties will be proportionate and will increase in cases of repetition. System controls will prevent payment in cases where scheme criteria have not been met by participants.

Risks have also been considered in relation to the ability of facilitators to deliver the programme. This is mitigated by the requirements that facilitators participate in Continuous Professional Development and that they have achieved a minimum of NFQ Level 8 or equivalent. The risk that a facilitator may not see a group through to completion is also mitigated by the facilitator requirement to have indemnity insurance in place to provide participating farmers a mechanism to pursue compensation if appropriate.

8.2.1.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. This involves the identification of risks in relation to both the knowledge providers and farmers.

8.2.1.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

All costings are based on the eligible knowledge transfer actions carried out by both facilitators (scheme beneficiaries) and participating farmers. They are based on the standard cost approach. The details associated with each element of the costings, by sector, are as follows.

Beef, Dairy & Sheep Costings

Facilitator Standard Cost Payment- €22,500 or €7,500 per annum (Based on an average group size of 15)

Farmer Standard Cost Payment - €2,250 or €750 per annum

Cost Breakdown

Facilitator element

The facilitator has to arrange 5 knowledge transfer meetings for participating farmers each year. Each meeting will take the facilitator 5 hours – 3 hours preparatory time and 2 hours meeting time costed at €80 per hour. The total cost over the three year period is €6,000 per group.

The facilitator is required to collaborate with each participating farmer in developing a Farm Improvement Plan over the period of participation in the programme. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Carbon Navigator, Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will take the facilitator 6 hours in the initial year and 3 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Based on the average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €14,400 per group.

Each facilitator will also incur an administration cost associated with their involvement with individual farmers and DAFM. It is estimated at 2 hours per year per farmer and is costed at €25 per hour. Based on the average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €2,250.

Farmer element

Each farmer will attend 5 meetings per year. Including the travel time a replacement farmer will be required for 4 hours per meeting. At a replacement farmer cost of €20 per hour this will cost €1,200 over the three year period.

To attend each meeting, on average each farmer will drive 70 kms. This results in an eligible travel cost of €483 over the three year period.

Each farmer will collaborate with his facilitator in developing a Farm Improvement Plan. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Carbon Navigator, Grassland Management Plan, Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will involve farmer preparatory time plus time directly engaging with his facilitator and Veterinary Practitioner for a combined period of 12 hours in the initial year and 8 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Using the farmer replacement cost rate of €20 per hour the total cost over the three year period is €560 per farmer.

See Beef, Dairy and Sheep Knowledge Transfer Group Costings Table below.

Tillage Costings

Facilitator Standard Cost Payment - €22,500 or €7,500 per annum (Based on an average group of 15)

Farmer Standard Cost Payment - €2,250 or €750 per annum

Cost Breakdown

Facilitator element

The facilitator has to arrange 5 knowledge transfer meetings for participating farmers each year. Each meeting will take the facilitator 5 hours – 3 hours preparatory time and 2 hours meeting time costed at €80 per hour. The total cost over the three year period is €6,000 per group.

The facilitator is required to collaborate with each participating farmer in developing a Farm Improvement Plan over the period of participation in the programme. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor/Machinery Cost, IPM Survey, Nutrient Management Plan and Monitoring Key Crop/IPM Indicators as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will take the facilitator 6 hours in the initial year and 3 hours in each of the year 2 and 3. Based on an average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €14,400 per group.

Each facilitator will also incur an administration cost associated with their involvement with individual farmers and DAFM. It is estimated at 2 hours per year per farmer and is costed at €25 per hour. Based on an average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €2,250.

Farmer element

Each farmer will attend 5 meetings per year. Including the travel time a replacement farmer will be required for 4 hours per meeting. At a replacement farmer cost of €20 per hour this will cost €1,200 over the three year period, averaging at €400 per year.

To attend each meeting, on average each farmer will drive 40 kms to attend each meeting. This results in an eligible travel cost of €276 over the three year period. This equates to €92 per farmer per year.

Each farmer will collaborate with his facilitator in developing a Farm Improvement Plan. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor/Machinery Cost, IPM Survey, Nutrient Management Plan and Monitoring Key Crop/IPM Indicators. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will involve farmer preparatory time and the farmer engaging directly with his facilitator for a period of 14 hours in the initial year and 13 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Using the farmer replacement cost rate of €20 per hour the total cost over the three year period is €800 per farmer, equating to €267 per year.

In total, the eligible cost per farmer of fully complying with the scheme is €758 per year.

See Tillage Knowledge Transfer Group Costings Table below.

Poultry Costings

Facilitator Cost - €15,000 or €5,000 per annum (Based on an average group of 10)

Farmer Cost - €2,250 or €750 per annum

Cost Breakdown

Facilitator element

The facilitator has to arrange 5 knowledge transfer meetings per year for participating farmers. Each meeting will take the facilitator 4 hours – 2 hours preparatory time and 2 hours meeting time costed at €80 per hour. The total cost over the three year period is €4,800 per group.

The facilitator is required to collaborate with each participating farmer in developing a Farm Improvement Plan over the period of participation in the programme. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Sustainability Plan, Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will take the facilitator 6 hours in the initial year, 3 hours in year 2, and 2 hours in year 3. Based on an average group size of 10 the total cost over the three year period is €8,800 per group.

Each facilitator will also incur an administration cost associated with their involvement with individual farmers and DAFM. It is estimated at 2 hours per year per farmer and is costed at €25 per hour. Based on an average group size of 10 the total cost over the three year period is €1,500.

Farmer element

Each farmer will attend 5 meetings per year. Including the travel time a replacement farmer will be required for 4 hours per meeting. At a replacement farmer cost of €20 per hour this will cost €1,200 over the three year period.

To attend each meeting, on average each farmer will drive 70 kms. This results in an eligible travel cost of €483 over the three year period.

Each farmer will collaborate with his facilitator in developing a Farm Improvement Plan. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Carbon Navigator/Sustainability Plan Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will involve farmer preparatory time plus time directly engaging with his facilitator and Veterinary Practitioner for a combined period of 12 hours in the initial year and 8 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Using the farmer replacement cost rate of

€20 per hour the total cost over the three year period is €560 per farmer.

See Poultry Knowledge Transfer Group Costings Table below.

Equines

Facilitator Standard Cost Payment- €22,500 or €7,500 per annum (Based on an average group of 15)

Farmer Standard Cost Payment - €2,250 or €750 per annum

Cost Breakdown

Facilitator element

The facilitator has to arrange 5 knowledge transfer meetings each year for participating farmers. Each meeting will take the facilitator 5 hours – 3 hours preparatory time and 2 hours meeting time costed at €80 per hour. The total cost over the three year period is €6,000 per group.

The facilitator is required to collaborate with each participating farmer in developing a Farm Improvement Plan. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will take the facilitator 6 hours in the initial year and 3 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Based on an average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €14,400 per group.

Each facilitator will also incur an administration cost associated with their involvement with individual farmers and DAFM. It is estimated at 2 hours per year per farmer and is costed at €25 per hour. Based on an average group size of 15 the total cost over the three year period is €2,250.

Farmer element

Each farmer will attend 5 meetings per year. Including the travel time a replacement farmer will be required for 4 hours per meeting. At a replacement farmer cost of €20 per hour this will cost €1,200 over the three year period.

To attend each meeting, on average each farmer will drive 70 kms. This results in an eligible travel cost of

€483 over the three year period.

Each farmer will collaborate with his facilitator in developing a Farm Improvement Plan. This plan involves the completion of a Profit Monitor, Carbon Navigator/Sustainability Plan Herd Health Plan and Breeding Plan as appropriate. It is estimated that the completion of this plan will involve farmer preparatory time plus time directly engaging with his facilitator and Veterinary Practitioner for a combined period of 12 hours in the initial year and 8 hours in each of the years 2 and 3. Using the farmer replacement cost rate of €20 per hour the total cost over the three year period is €560 per farmer.

See Equine Knowledge Transfer Group Costings Table below.

Beef, Dairy and Sheep Costing Tables – Average Group Size 15

All €	Meeting Cost	FIP Collaboration	Administration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Facilitator	6,000	14,400	2,250	22,500	7,500

All €	Meeting Cost	Travel Cost	FIP Collaboration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Farmer	1,200	483	560	2,250	750

Beef, Dairy and Sheep Costing table

Poultry Costing Tables Average Group Size 10

All €	Meeting Cost	FIP Collaboration	Administration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Facilitator	4,800	8,800	1,500	15,000	5,000

All €	Meeting Cost	Travel Cost	FIP Collaboration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Farmer	1,200	483	560	2,250	750

Poultry Costing Table

Tillage Costing Tables Average Group Size 15

All €	Meeting Cost	FIP Collaboration	Administration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Facilitator	6,000	14,400	2,250	22,500	7,500

All €	Meeting Cost	Travel Cost	FIP Collaboration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Farmer	1,200	276	800	2,250	750

Tillage Costing Table

Equine Costing Tables Average Group Size 15

All €	Meeting Cost	FIP Collaboration	Administration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Facilitator	6,000	14,400	2,250	22,500	7,500

All €	Meeting Cost	Travel Cost	FIP Collaboration	Total Payment	Annual Payment
Farmer	1,200	483	560	2,250	750

Equine Costing Table

8.2.1.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of appropriate capacities of bodies providing knowledge transfer services to carry out their tasks in the form of staff qualifications and regular training

Knowledge providers will be required to have a NFQ Level 8 qualification, or another specified qualification deemed eligible by DAFM.

In addition, the providers will also have to commit to undertake the Continued Professional Development delivered via Measure 2.

Definition of the duration and content of farm and forest exchange schemes and visits as referred to in Article 3 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

n/a

8.2.1.3.2. Measure 10 Training

Sub-measure:

- 1.1 - support for vocational training and skills acquisition actions

8.2.1.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

Training will be provided to beneficiaries under both Measure 10 schemes, namely GLAS & the Beef Data and Genomics Programme, in order to optimise delivery of these schemes.

BDGP

There are two elements to the BDGP training

a. General BDGP training

Participants in the Beef Data and Genomics programme will be required to attend an approved training course which will:

- Provide clear information as regards what is required at individual farm level and equip farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to optimise delivery of the commitments undertaken;
- Increase the participants' knowledge of genomics and breeding selection, focussing on the shifting emphasis to maternal traits in order to bring about efficiencies that will result in reduced green house gas emissions.

These courses are designed to provide:

- An introduction to the BDGP, it's regulatory basis, the objectives of the scheme and funding
- Information on the individual actions covering areas such as data collection, genotyping, genomic indices and the bull/heifer replacement strategy
- Information on controls, inspections and sanctions
- Training on the understanding and optimal use of breeding indices for maternal breeding strategies
- Training on the importance of data collection and maternal breeding traits, and the linkage with carbon efficiency at scheme level

Training will be delivered by a training provider to be selected following an open and transparent public procurement process.

The course content will be set out in the tender documentation. The course will last for 4 hours with attendance compulsory for all scheme participants. The training will be provided in a group setting with attendance verified to DAFM by the course provider.

Courses will be delivered at various locations to facilitate ease of access to training for farmers.

b. Focused training on the carbon navigator

The BDGP includes a commitment for the farmer to undertake a range of actions related to the Carbon Navigator. In order to ensure the most effective take up of the Carbon Navigator all BDGP beneficiaries must undergo two hours of preparatory training. This training will be delivered in a one on one setting by approved advisors who have undergone a relevant DAFM approved Continuous Professional Development module under Measure 2.3 (CPD for Agricultural Advisors)

GLAS

Under GLAS, beneficiaries will be required to attend approved training courses. Courses will provide GLAS beneficiaries with information on environmental benefits arising from the Agri-environment Measure and clarification on all relevant requirements at individual farm level and will equip farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to optimise delivery of the commitments undertaken.

These courses are designed to provide:

- An introduction to the GLAS scheme, its regulatory basis, the objectives of the scheme and funding
- Information on the individual commitments covering areas such as nutrient management, farming practices, record keeping, delivery timelines etc.
- Information on controls, inspections and sanctions
- Education on the consequences of agricultural pollution and its avoidance (including reference to climate change awareness, and mitigation of and adaptation to its effects)
- An appreciation of the importance and preservation of Natura 2000 sites and important bird habitats, wildlife habitats, etc.

Training will be delivered by professional advisors who, having received additional specific training on the GLAS scheme, are registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine as having the necessary competencies to advise farmers on the requirements of the scheme. With each tranche of GLAS, DAFM will invite proposals from these advisors to run local training course for GLAS participants.

Courses will be delivered at various locations to facilitate ease of access to training for farmers. Courses will be delivered in groups of 20-30 farmers, and will entail 6 hours of training.

8.2.1.3.2.2. Type of support

All payments in respect of eligible costs will be made in accordance with the requirements of Article 14 of Regulation 1305/2013.

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

Payment to the training provider will be made based on the price specified in the winning tender following successful completion of the specified number of training courses and confirmation of attendance by scheme

participants.

Payment to scheme participants will be in the form of a once off payment following successful attendance at the training course.

b. Carbon Navigator Training

Payment will be made to the training provider upon completion of the training.

GLAS

Payment to the training provider will be by way of a grant paid on successful delivery of courses.

Payment to scheme participants will be in the form of a once off payment following successful attendance at the training course.

8.2.1.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.1.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries will be the facilitators/trainers in all cases.

8.2.1.3.2.5. Eligible costs

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

Beneficiary (Knowledge Provider)

The Knowledge Provider will be paid the amount set out in the winning tender. Eligible costs will be linked to the organisation and delivery of the training.

Farmer

Each participating farmer is compensated for the time element (replacement farmer cost) and travel cost associated with attending the measure specific training. As per Regulation 1305/2013, this payment will be processed via the beneficiary.

b. Carbon Navigator Training

The eligible costs are the professional fee and preparation costs of the advisor delivering the training.

GLAS

Beneficiary (Knowledge Provider)

The Knowledge Provider will be paid the amount set by DAFM for delivery of courses. Eligible costs are linked to the organisation and delivery of the training.

Farmer

Each participating farmer is compensated for the time element (replacement farmer cost) associated with attending the measure specific training. As per Regulation 1305/2013, this payment will be processed via the beneficiary.

8.2.1.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

Eligibility will be determined by

- The provider must have trainers with qualifications in relevant disciplines at National Framework of Qualifications Level 8.
- Appropriate indemnity insurance arrangements must be in place.

b. Carbon Navigator Training

Eligibility will be determined by

- The provider must have a qualification in a relevant discipline at National Framework of Qualifications Level 8.
- The provider must have attended the DAFM approved CPD module delivered under Measure 2.3

GLAS

Providers must be registered professional advisors with DAFM. This entails

- Having a relevant National Framework of Qualifications Level 8 qualification
- Having received the GLAS specific training delivered for advisors by DAFM
- Being FAS registered and trained.

8.2.1.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

The provider of the knowledge will be selected on the basis of an open and transparent public procurement process.

The selection criteria will be on the basis of the quality of the proposals submitted and will ensure transparency, equality of treatment and impartiality. The selection criteria will include criteria relating to:

- Price,
- Educational qualifications of personnel proposed to carry out the training
- Capacity to deliver a country-wide schedule of training
- Experience in carrying out similar training.

b. Carbon Navigator Training

The pool of eligible advisors will be ranked and selected centrally by reference to

- Educational qualification
- Experience in delivering similar training
- Geographic spread

Following this process, the list of selected potential beneficiaries will be made available to BDGP farmers via the DAFM website and the farmer will choose which advisor to use to avail of the required training.

GLAS

As eligible advisors apply to deliver courses, they will be selected with reference to

- Previous experience of delivering similar courses, and
- Geographical spread

8.2.1.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

The total payment to the service provider will be as set out in the winning tender.

The eligible costs of the participating farmers will be €166 for attendance at the 4 hour training course.

b. Carbon Navigator training

Each one on one training support delivered corresponds to a payment at the rate of €160.

GLAS

The total amount payable per attendee at the training courses is €238. €158 of this total is in respect of the farmers costs for attendance at the training.

8.2.1.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.1.3.2.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

The identified risks include:

1. Inability of service provider to adequately deliver training course
2. Failure to accurately record and verify farmer attendance
3. Training not undertaken by the farmer

b. Carbon Navigator training

The identified risks include

1. The provider may not have the relevant expertise to successfully deliver the training
2. The required training may not be delivered

GLAS

The identified risks include:

1. The course syllabus may be inappropriate
2. Farmers may not attend courses
3. Facilitator/farmer ratio may be too high for effective information transfer
4. Training may not be provided in time to ensure effective GLAS implementation

8.2.1.3.2.9.2. Mitigating actions

BDGP:

a. General BDGP training

In respect of the above risks, the following risk mitigation processes are in place

1. Experience and relevant qualifications are included in the selection and eligibility criteria
2. DAFM will put in place oversight via attendance at a selection of courses.
3. The beneficiary will be required to confirm farmer attendance to DAFM as the training is mandatory.

b. Carbon Navigator training

In respect of the above risks, the following risk mitigation processes are in place

- 1) Providers will be required to have a relevant qualification and be required to undergo the relevant CPD module
- 2) The provider will be required to provide a documented confirmation that the training has been delivered in advance of payment being made.

GLAS

In respect of the above risks, the following risk mitigation processes are in place

1. Provider must submit proposed course content for each course to DAFM for pre approval
2. The provider will be required to submit attendance registers to DAFM
3. A minimum and maximum number of attendees will be fixed for each course (between 20 and 30 attendees per course)
4. Training will be required to be completed by the end of Year 2 of a GLAS contract.

8.2.1.3.2.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.1.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

BDGP

a. General BDGP training

Knowledge Provider element

- The total payment to the service provider will be set out in the winning tender.

Farmer element

- A 4 hour training course with 2 hour travel time gives rise to 6 hours in respect of a replacement farmer requirement at a cost a cost of €20 per hour. This gives rise to a cost of €120.

- An average 100km return journey calculated at the midpoint of civil service travel rates gives a cost of €46.

b. Carbon Navigator Training

The support rate is based on two hour delivery time at a rate of €80 per hour.

GLAS

Knowledge Provider element

The €80 per attendee rate for the knowledge provider is based on the cost associated with delivery and preparation time, and relevant costs relating to venue hire, insurance, course materials and delivery costs.

Farmer element

- A 6 hour training course and 1 hour travel time gives rise to 7 hours in respect of a replacement farmer requirement at a cost of €20 per hour. This gives rise to a cost of €140.
- An average 40km return journey calculated at the midpoint of civil service travel rates gives a cost of €18.

8.2.1.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of appropriate capacities of bodies providing knowledge transfer services to carry out their tasks in the form of staff qualifications and regular training

BDGP

Course providers will be required to have a NFQ Level 8 in a relevant discipline. In relation to the Carbon Navigator training, relevant CPD will also be required.

GLAS

Providers must be registered professional advisors with DAFM. This entails

- Having a relevant National Framework of Qualifications Level 8 qualification
- Having received the GLAS specific training delivered for advisors by DAFM
- Being FAS registered and trained.

Definition of the duration and content of farm and forest exchange schemes and visits as referred to in Article 3 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

n/a

8.2.1.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.1.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.1.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.1.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.1.5. *Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant*

As referenced above.

8.2.1.6. *Information specific to the measure*

Definition of appropriate capacities of bodies providing knowledge transfer services to carry out their tasks in the form of staff qualifications and regular training

As referenced above.

Definition of the duration and content of farm and forest exchange schemes and visits as referred to in Article 3 of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

As referenced above.

8.2.1.7. *Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure*

Knowledge Transfer

Discussions with relevant stakeholders indicate that the sector will have capacity to provide the required level of Knowledge Transfer Groups. As the requirements increases over the period of the programme this capacity will need to expand to cope with demand and it is expected that if the process is managed over time

the sector will cope with the additional capacity.

As regards qualifications and training, experience gained from operating the discussion group model has shown that the level of expertise provided by facilitators is extremely high. The SWOT analysis confirmed this. However, where gaps have been identified, this will be addressed by ensuring there is an appropriate linkage to CPD provided under the RDP and by ensuring the scheme design encourages facilitators to avail of additional skills.

Measure 10 Training

BDGP

Course providers will be required to have a NFQ Level 8 in a relevant discipline. In relation to the Carbon Navigator training, relevant CPD will also be required.

GLAS

Providers must be registered professional advisors with DAFM. This entails

- Having a relevant National Framework of Qualifications Level 8 qualification
- Having received the GLAS specific training delivered for advisors by DAFM
- Being FAS registered and trained.

8.2.2. M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)

8.2.2.1. *Legal basis*

Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013.

8.2.2.2. *General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives*

Under this measure there are a number of separate elements as follows:

- i. **Submeasure 2.3 - Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors.**
- ii. **Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare incorporating**
 - Submeasure 2.3 Animal Health & Welfare - Training for advisors
 - Submeasure 2.1 Animal Health & Welfare - On farm advice

This measure contributes to focus areas

- 2A – economic performance and modernisation
- 3B – farm risk prevention and management
- 5D – green house gas and ammonia emissions.

Measure 10 will also include an advisory element for farmers in GLAS, and is the dominant Measure in this regard. This involves the development of Natura and Commonage Plans where applicable. This is fully integrated into the design of Measure 10. The obligatory use of the services of an approved planner to submit GLAS applications, however, is an unpaid commitment, neither remunerated under Measure 2 nor under Measure 10.

i. **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

The effective transfer of existing best practice to farm level is dependent on a highly skilled and well informed advisory service. Support for CPD for the advisors engaged in all aspects of the on farm advisory services will ensure that the most up to date and relevant information and skills are employed in the delivery of the advisors' service to farmers.

The beneficial role that CPD for agricultural advisors plays in areas such as environmental actions and

climate change actions was a recurring theme in the design phase of the new RDP and especially the SWOT analysis. Up-skilling of advisors is a measure which will complement and support other areas of intervention and ensure the achievement of greater value for money.

The adoption and effective application of new technologies by farmers is a critical requirement for the sustainable growth of the agriculture sector, and will provide farmers with the wherewithal to respond in an innovative and sustainable way to the changing demands of the market. However, in order to manage their enterprises and to respond to change in an effective way, farmers need the most up-to-date information and methods. Ongoing training and development of advisors will ensure that they can respond to these demands.

Participation in continuing professional development activities will allow advisors to enhance their knowledge base on an ongoing basis and ensure that they are familiar with the latest techniques and regulatory requirements in a rapidly changing agricultural industry. It will promote the development of knowledgeable, professional and competent advisors, and thereby enhance the quality of service provided to farmers. This in turn will underpin more efficient and effective practices feeding into more competitive and environmentally efficient farming practices.

Specifically it will contribute to:

- The maintenance of professional competence,
- Enhancement of existing knowledge and skills, and
- Development of new knowledge and skills.

This will result in a more efficient delivery of the proposed Knowledge Transfer Groups in the various sectors. Additionally, the success of a number of measures proposed under the RDP, including GLAS and the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes, will depend on suitably qualified advisors dispensing up-to-date advice to farmers. Thus, this measure will contribute to a wide range of Rural Development objectives.

(ii) Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare

Given the high animal health and financial costs associated with animal diseases, there is a strong economic rationale for targeting investment at efforts to manage and eliminate a number of diseases. This measure will strategically target a number of core areas in this regard such as Johne's disease, BVD, SCC and significant animal health issues in the pig sector. The savings arising from the eradication of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) are estimated at €102 million / annum, and the potential savings associated with Somatic Cell Count (SCC) reduction are of the order of €80 million / annum.

The advice offered will be farm-specific, and provided to individual farmers on request. Increased animal health and welfare will enhance production efficiency, the sustainable management of natural resources, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The measure provides an effective structure for transferring research findings into practice, as it provides a clear linkage between the collation and peer-review by the existing Animal Health Ireland Technical Working Groups, the development of disease control programmes by these groups in conjunction with the relevant Implementation Groups, the training and approval of the specialist advisor, and the delivery by that advisor of farmer training. A national database will hold information on the number of completed interventions between the trained specialist advisor and the farmer, and on the outcome of these. This information will be directly accessible by DAFM allowing the required information to be gathered centrally.

There is a complementary link between this Measure and Measure 1 – Knowledge Transfer Groups. The focus in this regard will be to ensure that animal health topics covered in the Knowledge Transfer Groups cover the general principle of the control of the diseases to be covered in the animal health and welfare advisory service and signpost farmers towards the advisory support available.

8.2.2.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.2.3.1. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Sub-measure:

- 2.3 - support for training of advisors

8.2.2.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

CPD for advisors will be offered to advisors who have attained a minimum of National Framework of Qualifications Level 8 educational qualification (in a relevant discipline) or another specified qualification as deemed eligible by DAFM. It will be offered in the form of training courses to be provided by appropriately qualified service providers.

CPD has been designed to incorporate

- Identification of appropriate areas for skills enhancement. The identification of the areas in which courses will be provided will arise out of an ongoing stakeholder consultation process.
- Structured calls for proposals for appropriately qualified professionals/organisations to deliver the necessary training for advisors across the range of identified areas. The proposals will be open tender applications that adhere to all public procurement guidelines and will be open to both public and private bodies.

- Clear selection criteria to ensure value for money – The selection criteria will be open and transparent and will ensure that the most appropriate tender application will be successful.

Having identified a topic that qualified advisors need to be upskilled on, the Department will advertise an open tender competition and allow qualified service providers to submit tender proposals to provide this training. The tender proposals will be evaluated based on predetermined selection criteria. The successful tenderer will then provide the training to qualified advisors based on the specifications set out in the tender proposal.

8.2.2.3.1.2. Type of support

Payment will be made based on the price set out in the successful tender application, by means of a direct payment as service is provided.

8.2.2.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

National and EU public procurement rules will be respected, in particular (a) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (b) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (c) Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC and (d) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

8.2.2.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries will be the training providers who succeed in the tender competition.

8.2.2.3.1.5. Eligible costs

The eligible costs are the costs incurred in organising and delivering the training to the advisors. The eligible costs will include the salaries of the service providers, the service providers' travel costs, materials prepared for course delivery, associated administration costs and costs linked to hosting the training course. These eligible costs will be set out in the tender application with cost comprising part of the tender evaluation criteria.

8.2.2.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

DAFM will identify areas linked to specific policy areas, regulatory issues or scheme compliance where it has been identified that a gap exists in the existing knowledge base of the advisory services. Once this has been identified DAFM will operate an open call for proposals to interested and qualified providers to tender to provide the specified training. National Framework of Qualifications (or another specified qualification

as deemed eligible by DAFM) Level 8 educational qualification is required for eligibility.

Details in relation to training will be included in the tender and T&C documents.

8.2.2.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Successful providers will be selected using an open tender process that will be based on quality, transparency, equality of treatment and impartiality. Ranking and selection will be based on clearly defined eligibility criteria that will include:

- Price,
- Ability to deliver the training specified in the form of qualified staff and expertise in the area in which the advice will be provided,
- Experience in delivery of similar courses, and
- Proposed methodology and resources available.

8.2.2.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support will be based on the price set out in the tender documentation, subject to a maximum amount of €200,000 per three years per service provider. The aid intensity will be 100% of the cost specified in the successful tender.

8.2.2.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.2.3.1.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

There will be a risk that the identification of the areas in which the training courses will be provided will be inadequate.

There is a risk that the tender applications will not be evaluated accurately.

There is a risk that the successful tenderer will not provide the training as set out in the tender documentation or to the level prescribed in the tender submission.

8.2.2.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

The managing division has an appropriate control environment and payment mechanism in place.

The identification of appropriate training topics will arise from an extensive stakeholder consultation process.

The managing division will be adequately trained in Public Procurement Guidelines and will avail of the expertise in the Department's Central Procurement Unit and the Office of Government Procurement at all stages in the tender design and evaluation.

National and EU public procurement rules will be respected, in particular (a) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (b) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (c) Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC and (d) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

Appropriate administrative and on the spot checks will be conducted by the operating division.

8.2.2.3.1.9.3. *Overall assessment of the measure*

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. Appropriate checks have been designed to ensure controllability.

8.2.2.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Support will be based on the price of the successful tender submission.

8.2.2.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

General principles to ensure appropriate resources in the form of regularly trained and qualified staff and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the field of advice. Identification of the elements that the advice will cover

CPD for agricultural advisors will result in training courses being delivered by qualified providers on a range of topics including financial management, animal health and welfare, environment and climate change, scheme delivery and regulatory matters.

A Level 8 National Framework of Qualifications (or another specified qualification as deemed eligible by DAFM) educational qualification is required for eligibility.

8.2.2.3.2. Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare – On Farm advice

Sub-measure:

- 2.1 - support to help benefiting from the use of advisory services

8.2.2.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

The operation will involve the delivery of specialist animal health and welfare advice on a request basis at individual farm level. This on farm advice will be targeted at the prioritised areas in which advisors have been trained under submeasure 2.3 above.

8.2.2.3.2.2. Type of support

Payment will be made directly to the beneficiary in respect of advice imparted by the practitioner at individual farm level based on a maximum 3 hour rate.

8.2.2.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.2.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiary will be the trained practitioners delivering on farm advice on animal health and welfare issues.

8.2.2.3.2.5. Eligible costs

The eligible cost will be the the professional fee invoiced in respect of animal health and welfare advice delivered on farm by the beneficiary.

8.2.2.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

The beneficiaries will be qualified veterinary surgeons who deliver the on farm advice. . Eligibility also requires the advisor to have undergone the specialist training of advisors under submeasure 2.3 and to hold a relevant Level 8 National Framework of Qualifications qualification

8.2.2.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Ranking and selection criteria will be applied to the pool of eligible applicants. These criteria will include:

- Geographical location
- Availability to deliver advice
- Experience in the relevant animal health area
- Relevant qualifications

The criteria will be transparent, and marks will be awarded in relation to each. A minimum threshold score will be required in order to be selected. Once beneficiaries have been selected in this way, the administrative support service supported via Technical Assistance will match beneficiaries to farmers seeking advice in consultation with DAFM.

8.2.2.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Training will be based on a 3 hour advisory session at individual farm level, for which the professional fee will be payable, limited to a maximum rate of €80 per hour.

8.2.2.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.2.3.2.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

Risks relate to ensuring the quality of advice provided, ensuring the advice is implemented, and the need to ensure a tangible output.

8.2.2.3.2.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

Outputs from the service will include an action plan agreed between the advisor and farmer with specific, actionable recommendations. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the delivery of the advisory services will be carried out by a combination of targeted site visits, the surveying of the target groups, and the analysis of the action plans and farm-specific information held on the relevant national database.

8.2.2.3.2.9.3. *Overall assessment of the measure*

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. Appropriate checks have been designed to ensure controllability.

8.2.2.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

The support available to beneficiaries will amount to an hourly rate for professional advice to cover 3 hours,

limited to a maximum rate of €80 per hour.

The maximum rate for the professional fee in respect of the 3 hours on farm training takes account of the following:

- (i) current fees paid by DAFM to private Veterinary Practitioners performing TB testing.
- (ii) current rates charged by Private Veterinary Practitioners to their clients for call outs and
- (ii) Fees charged by farm advisors

8.2.2.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

General principles to ensure appropriate resources in the form of regularly trained and qualified staff and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the field of advice. Identification of the elements that the advice will cover

The implementation of the measure on affected farms would be expected to significantly improve animal health and welfare outcomes associated with BVD, Johne's disease and dairy cow mastitis, as well as significant diseases in the pig sector. Similarly, the measures would be expected to address the problem of antimicrobial resistance by reducing the need for antimicrobial intervention and by highlighting the need for the appropriate use of these substances.

Providers of the advisory service will be qualified veterinary surgeons who are registered with the Irish Veterinary Council, and they will be required to engage in specialist training to be provided via submeasure 2.3.

8.2.2.3.3. Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare – Training for Advisors

Sub-measure:

- 2.3 - support for training of advisors

8.2.2.3.3.1. Description of the type of operation

The operation will involve the specialist training of the practitioners/veterinarians to deliver an on farm animal health and welfare advisory service. The advice to be provided on farm will strategically target a number of core areas such as Johne's disease, BVD, SCC and significant animal health issues in the pig sector.

8.2.2.3.3.2. Type of support

Payment will be made to a specialist trainer (for each specified disease) for the training of up to the 450 practitioners/veterinarians who will then go on to deliver on farm advice under submeasure 2.1

Payment will be made to the trainer based on the costs set out in the successful tender.

8.2.2.3.3.3. Links to other legislation

National and EU public procurement rules will be respected, in particular (a) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (b) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (c) Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC and (d) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

8.2.2.3.3.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiary will be the body/authority selected via a procurement process to provide specialist training to the advisors who will then deliver the on farm animal health and welfare advisory service under submeasure 2.1.

8.2.2.3.3.5. Eligible costs

The eligible costs are the costs incurred in organising and delivering the training to the advisors. The eligible costs will include the salaries of the service providers, the service providers' travel costs, materials prepared for course delivery, associated administration costs and costs linked to hosting the training course.

These eligible costs will be set out in the tender application with cost comprising part of the tender

evaluation criteria.

8.2.2.3.3.6. Eligibility conditions

DAFM will identify areas linked to specific animal health and welfare policy areas, where it has been identified that a gap exists in the existing knowledge base of the advisory services. Then DAFM will operate an open call for proposals to interested and qualified bodies to tender to provide the specified training.

Eligible trainers will be qualified veterinary surgeons who are registered with the Irish Veterinary Council with a relevant National Framework of Qualifications Level 9 qualification.

8.2.2.3.3.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Successful providers will be selected using an open tender process. Ranking and selection will be based on clearly defined eligibility criteria that will include:

- Price,
- Ability to deliver the training specified in the form of qualified staff and expertise in the area in which the advice will be provided,
- Experience in delivery of similar courses, and
- Proposed methodology and resources available.

The tender process will set out clear criteria.

8.2.2.3.3.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support will be based on the price set out in the tender documentation, subject to a maximum amount of €200,000 per three years per service provider

The total support payable will be calculated on the basis of the number of disease training sessions required. It is envisaged that there will be 30 training sessions per annum with 15 veterinary participants per session with a maximum of €2,200 per session.

8.2.2.3.3.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.2.3.3.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

There is a risk that the identification of the areas in which the training courses will be provided will be inadequate.

There is a risk that the tender applications will not be evaluated accurately.

There is a risk that the successful tenderer will not provide the training as set out in the tender documentation or to the level prescribed in the tender submission.

8.2.2.3.3.9.2. Mitigating actions

The managing division has an appropriate control environment and payment mechanism in place.

The identification of appropriate training topics will arise from an extensive stakeholder consultation process.

The managing division will be adequately trained in Public Procurement Guidelines and will avail of the expertise in the Department's Central Procurement Unit and the Office of Government Procurement at all stages in the tender design and evaluation.

National and EU public procurement rules will be respected, in particular (a) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (b) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (c) Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC and (d) the general public procurement principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

Appropriate administrative and on the spot checks will be conducted by the operating division.

8.2.2.3.3.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. Appropriate checks have been designed to ensure controllability.

8.2.2.3.3.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Support will be based on the price set out in the tender documentation, subject to a maximum amount of €200,000 per three years per service provider, and will be calculated on the basis of the number of disease training sessions required. It is envisaged that there will be 30 training sessions per annum with 15 veterinary participants per session with a maximum of €2,200 per session.

8.2.2.3.3.11. Information specific to the operation

General principles to ensure appropriate resources in the form of regularly trained and qualified staff and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the field of advice. Identification of the elements that the advice will cover

The implementation of the measures on affected farms would be expected to significantly improve animal health and welfare outcomes associated with BVD, Johne's disease and dairy cow mastitis. Similarly, the measure would be expected to address the problem of antimicrobial resistance by reducing the need for antimicrobial intervention and by highlighting the need for the appropriate use of these substances. Providers of the training to advisors will be qualified veterinary surgeons who are registered with the Irish Veterinary Council who have a relevant National Framework of Qualifications Level 9 qualification.

8.2.2.4. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.2.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.2.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.2.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.2.5. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

As referenced above.

8.2.2.6. Information specific to the measure

General principles to ensure appropriate resources in the form of regularly trained and qualified staff and advisory experience and reliability with respect to the field of advice. Identification of the elements that the advice will cover

As referenced above.

8.2.2.7. *Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure*

As referenced above.

8.2.3. M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)

8.2.3.1. Legal basis

Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Investment in Physical Assets)

8.2.3.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

Measure 4 consists of

- TAMS II with various strands of support under the measure. As the strands of support are rolled out some of them may be merged for the purposes of simplification from a national administrative perspective. However, all of TAMS II is programmed under sub-measure 4.1 – support for investments in agricultural holdings.
- A number of non-productive investments (submeasure 4.4), which are delivered nationally via the GLAS Agri-environment and Climate Measure. The logic underlying this submeasure is intrinsically linked to GLAS in Measure 10, and the funding is allocated under that dominant Measure.

This measure has been designed according to the overall intervention logic and overarching RDP strategy to contribute towards a range of focus areas as follows:

- Focus area 2A – Economic performance, modernisation & restructuring
- Focus area 2B – Facilitating the entry of farmers and generational renewal
- Focus area 3B - Farm risk prevention & management
- Focus area 4A – Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 200 areas
- Focus area 4B – Improving Water Management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- Focus area 5B - Efficiency in Energy Use
- Focus area 5D - Reducing GHG & ammonia emissions

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II (TAMS II)

Investment in physical assets will enable the sector to respond to a wide range of policy challenges, including the cessation of milk quotas from 2015, the need for more modern and efficient infrastructure, animal health and welfare issues, etc.

The SWOT analysis and public consultation identified a need for capital investment over a wide range of investments. The areas prioritised for investment in the current proposal for TAMS II will contribute to a number of central themes in the farming sector, including

- Enabling growth and competitiveness
- Environmental and climate change issues
- Supporting increased efficiency of holdings
- Improved animal health and welfare

In addition, it is proposed that this measure will also address one of the key structural constraints identified in the sector – namely age profile. As a complement to supports under Pillar 1 and supports outside of the CAP framework (eg taxation measures), TAMS II will specifically target support at young farmers by offering them a greater rate of aid intensity.

The areas identified for funding are:

Farm nutrient storage, Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property – Support will be provided for grant-aid for the investment in the construction of farm nutrient storage facilities on farms.

Animal housing, Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property – Support will be provided for grant-aid for the investment in the construction of new animal housing on Irish farms. The conversion of existing buildings will not be permitted (except in the case of organic applicants). Support will be provided for grant-aid for investment in a select range of items including loose houses for cattle, solid floor calf housing, sheep housing, goat housing, slatted houses, cubicle houses, unroofed slatted feed areas, roofing of livestock feed yards, automatic slurry scrapers, isolation boxes, calving pens, bull pens and enclosures and associated works, and crushes and enclosures and associated works.

The RDP preparatory analysis identified a need for capital investment over a wide range of areas in order to target support towards key sectors. The main targeting in relation to this strand of support is at the cattle sector – this will form the majority of the animal housing strand of support. Sheep and goat sectors are also targeted for support but, numerically, this is expected to be at a much lower level. The final targeting element is towards the organic sector, to provide for an integrated framework of supports for a sector whose growth will bring much wider environmental benefits.

Dairy equipment, Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset - -. Support will be provided for grant-aid for investment in a select range of items, including important equipment for the dairy sector such as robotic milking machines, bulk milk tanks, milking equipment, storage and cooling equipment.

Low emission spreading equipment, Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset – Support will be provided for grant-aid for the investment in

mobile slurry tanks and umbilical systems attached to low emission spreading equipment. In order to encourage the purchase by farmers of this specialised type of equipment, this strand of support under the measure will not be subject to the overall investment ceiling which will be applicable under the other strands of support introduced under TAMS II.

Animal Welfare and Farm Safety, Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property and Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset - Support will be provided for grant-aid for investment in a select range of items, including important safety elements such as replacement slats and safety rails/fencing, solid covers for slurry stores, handling facilities, calving and isolation facilities, aeration systems and some upgrading works including rewiring.

Pig and poultry investments in energy, water meters and medicated feed/water dispensers, Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property and Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset - Support will be provided for grant-aid for the upgrading of existing buildings in the two sectors mentioned. For example: medicated feed/water dispensers, solar panels, heat recovery units, heat pumps, biomass boilers, ventilation and insulation

Organic Capital Investment (organic farmers only), Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property and Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset - Support will be provided for grant-aid for capital investments across a wide range of areas specifically targeted at the organic sector. For example: Animal housing and nutrient storage facilities, grain, hay, straw and farm product stores, safety elements on existing farm structures, animal handling equipment, dairy milking and storage equipment, horticulture structures, polytunnels, specialised organic machinery and equipment.

Young Farmer Capital Investment Article 45.2(a) the construction, acquisition, including leasing or improvement of immovable property and Article 45.2 (b) the purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset – Support will be provided for grant-aid for capital investments at an enhanced grant-rate of 60 % in respect of investments by young farmers in the specific strands of support under the measure outlined above. In addition, support will be provided for grant-aid for dairy buildings specifically for qualifying young farmers.

Non Productive Investments (delivered via GLAS)

This submeasure incorporates support for a number of non productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives as pursued under Measure 10 in particular.

For the applicant, these non productive investments will form part of the GLAS scheme, and thus they will form part of GLAS applications. The non productive investments as set out in the GLAS tier 3 list of

actions are:

- Bee boxes
- Bird boxes
- Bat boxes
- Planting new hedgerow
- Traditional orchards
- Planting a grove of native trees
- Laying Hedgerows
- Coppicing Hedgerows
- Twite B
- Grey Partridge
- Riparian Margins
- Conservation of Solitary Bees (Sand)

Further information in relation to all these actions can be found in the GLAS Specification document attached as an Annex to the RDP.

8.2.3.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.3.3.1. Non Productive Investments (delivered via GLAS)

Sub-measure:

- 4.4 - support for non-productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives

8.2.3.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

This submeasure incorporates support for a number of non productive investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives as pursued under Measure 10 in particular.

For the applicant, these non productive investments will form part of the GLAS scheme, and thus they will form part of GLAS applications. The non productive investments as set out in the GLAS tier 3 list of actions are:

Creation of bird, bee and bat habitats

The following actions involve the purchase or creation of a suitable habitat and includes both capital and agri-environment elements.

- Bee boxes
- Bird boxes

- Bat boxes
- Conservation of Solitary Bees - Sand

Landscape Features

The following actions deliver landscape and biodiversity benefits under Measure 10. The capital costs refer to purchase of units where applicable e.g.trees, plants and to other elements such as establishment of fencing. These are integrated actions with both a capital and agri-environment elements such as the control of vegetation, which ensure delivery of the required environmental dividend:

- Planting new hedgerows
- Traditional orchards
- Planting a grove of native trees
- Laying Hedgerows
- Coppicing Hedgerows

Establishment of Fence

The following are integrated actions, with the establishment of fencing ensuring that the desired habitat/margin is created/maintained.

- Twite B
- Grey Partridge
- Riparian Margins

8.2.3.3.1.2. Type of support

This is an investment support measure which is integrated with GLAS, and delivered under Measure 10. Support will be paid via the payment made via GLAS / Measure 10. Costings are based on standardised costs, which have been verified by an independent authority, as part of the Measure 10 verification process. The non productive investments are linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives.

8.2.3.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

Regulation 1306/2013 as regards GAEC and relevant SMRs.

8.2.3.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are eligible GLAS farmers who have the relevant non productive investments incorporated into their GLAS plans. They will carry out the relevant agri-environment work for these actions under

Measure 10.

8.2.3.3.1.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs will be in line with Article 45 of Regulation EU No. 1305/2013 and Article 65 of Regulation EU No. 1303/2013. Eligible costs will include the construction or improvement of immovable property. Standard costs will be used.

8.2.3.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

All beneficiaries must be an approved GLAS/Measure 10 applicant.

8.2.3.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

The selection criteria will be those applying to GLAS applications.

8.2.3.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

The applicable rates are as set out for the individual actions in the GLAS costings (see measure 10). The breakdown between investment and agri-environment costs is shown in the table below. The support rate is 100% of independently verified standard costs (with exception of Planting New Hedgerow action where the rate is 60% overall).

Note – while the payment rates are expressed nominally on a hectare basis, the underlying standard costs have been calculated on a per unit basis – eg the number of whips/trees, the number of bat boxes etc.

Commitment	Payment	Agri Element Art 28 1305/2013	Capital Element Art 17(1)(d) & 17(4) 1305/2013
Planting New Hedgerow	€5.00	€3.95	€1.05
Bat Nest Boxes	€13.00	€2.98	€10.00
Bird Nest Boxes	€6.00	€3.40	€2.60
Conservation of Solitary Bees a. Box	€6.00	€2.80	€3.20
Conservation of Solitary Bees b. Sand	€45.00	€31.72	€13.28
Grey Partridge	€2.10	€1.10	€1.00
Twite B: Improved Grassland Field Management Option	€1.50	€0.84	€0.66
Coppicing of Hedgerows	€2.20	€0.88	€1.32
Laying of Hedgerows	€3.70	€2.38	€1.32
Riparian Margins a. 3 metre margin	€0.90	€0.24	€0.66
Riparian Margins b. 6 metre margin	€1.20	€0.54	€0.66
Riparian Margins c. 10 metre margin	€1.60	€0.94	€0.66
Riparian Margins d. 30 metre margin	€3.60	€2.92	€0.66
Planting a Grove of Native Trees	€0.90	€0.42	€0.48
Traditional Orchards	€23.50	€12.16	€11.34

Amounts and support rates

8.2.3.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.3.3.1.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As support is delivered via GLAS, much of the detail here is integrated into the corresponding text under GLAS in Measure 10.

However, there are also risks linked to the investment based nature of the actions in this submeasure, including

- The risk that the investment will not be delivered
- The risk that the investment will not be delivered to the required standard

8.2.3.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

As support is delivered via GLAS, much of the detail here is integrated into the corresponding text under GLAS in Measure 10

In relation to the specific investment related risks, the risk of non delivery will be mitigated by the inspection regime. The risk related to delivery to a required standard will be mitigated by the inspection regime, the GLAS training course, and the involvement of a professional planner in developing a farmer's GLAS plan.

8.2.3.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As support is delivered via GLAS, the detail here is integrated into the corresponding text under GLAS in Measure 10.

8.2.3.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Support is calculated on the basis of Standard Costs and the methodology and payment rates have been independently verified. As support is delivered via GLAS, the detail here is integrated into the corresponding text under GLAS in Measure 10.

Please see note in section 8.2.3.7.1.8 in relation to the calculation of the standard costs.

8.2.3.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of non productive investments

Investments that do not lead to any significant increase in the value or profitability of the agricultural holding and are linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives under Measure 10.

Definition of collective investments

Not applicable.

Definition of integrated projects

Measure 10 commitments that require non productive investments under Measure 4 to fully achieve agri-environment-climate objectives.

Definition and identification of the eligible Natura 2000 sites and other eligible areas of high nature value

Not applicable.

Description of the targeting of the support to farms in accordance with the SWOT carried out in relation to the priority referred to in Article 5(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

As support is delivered via GLAS, the targeting here is integrated into the targeted and prioritised structure of GLAS which draws heavily and directly on the themes emerging from the RDP preparatory analyses.

List of new requirements imposed by Union legislation for complying with which support may be granted under Article 17(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Not applicable.

Where relevant, the minimum standards for energy efficiency referred to in Article 13(c) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

Where relevant, definition of the thresholds referred to in Article 13(e) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

8.2.3.3.2. Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II (TAMS II)

Sub-measure:

- 4.1 - support for investments in agricultural holdings

8.2.3.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

As indicated above, the objective of the measure is to encourage investment in a number of particular target areas which will promote, in particular, increased competitiveness and sustainability in those sectors in which grant-aid will be made available. The provision of a higher aid intensity for young farmers is aimed at supporting young farmers wishing to enter the sector or improve their holdings.

It is intended to use a similar structure to that which was in place for TAMS under the RDP 2007-2013. Thus, under the overarching structure of TAMS II a separate strand of support will be established for each investment area in as far as is possible. This structure will facilitate a streamlined application process.

In order to ensure that approvals are issued to farmers on a regular basis, the application period will, in most cases, be divided into tranches and a separate financial ceiling fixed for each individual tranche. Where insufficient funding is available in a particular tranche, applications will be rolled forward for consideration under the next tranche.

8.2.3.3.2.2. Type of support

This is a capital investment grant scheme. The standard rate of grant will be 40%, with young farmers attracting a higher rate of 60% under a dedicated scheme.

8.2.3.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

It is not envisaged that any of the strands of support under the measure will provide specific assistance to enable an applicant to meet an impending or recently introduced EU agricultural standard. However, in several cases, the measure will have to take account of existing EU requirements such as the Nitrates Directive (Directive 91/676) and the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60), and Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling. Any proposed investments under the measure will take account of environmental legislation i.e. new structures would improve the environmental benefits; increased storage capacity would add to the buffering capacity in adverse weather conditions and low emission spreading technology will reduce ammonia emissions.

8.2.3.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries will be active farmers, with the possibility of groups of farmers as beneficiaries, with young

farmers (as defined in Article 2(1)(n) of the Rural Development Regulation No 1305/2013) benefiting from an increased rate of aid. In order to ensure that as many young farmers as possible can avail of the enhanced scheme, it is proposed to use the maximum flexibility available and accept applications from young farmers who commenced farming during the five years preceding date of application. Registered Farm Partnerships and Legal Persons will also be potential beneficiaries under the scheme, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria.

8.2.3.3.2.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs will be specified in advance as part of the terms and conditions attaching to each of the strands of support under the measure. These will be in line with Article 45 of Regulation EU No. 1305/2013 and Article 65 of Regulation EU No. 1303/2013. Eligible costs will include inter alia: the construction or improvement of immovable property and the purchase of new machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset.

8.2.3.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

Farmers in all areas of the country will be entitled to apply for grant-aid under TAMS II, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria laid down in each individual strand of support under the measure.

The eligibility conditions are as follows for the different strands of support under TAMS II:

Strand of Support under TAMS II - Eligibility Criteria

Young Farmers' Capital Investment

The applicant must:

- Hold a Department identifier
- Be between 18 years and not more than 40 years of age at application
- Have not received grant-aid under a previous Installation Aid Scheme
- Meet the requirements of set-up for the first time within five years of application
- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 15ha land declared under PBS or 20 production units
- Meet specific educational qualifications
- Have effective control of the holding

Dairy Equipment

The applicant must:

- Hold a Department identifier
- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 5ha land declared under PBS

Low Emission Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESS)

The applicant must:

- Hold a Department identifier
- Have a minimum of 5ha land declared under PBS or 60 production units for pig farming

Organic Capital Investments

The applicant must:

- Be a licensed organic producer
- Hold a Department identifier
- Have ownership or lease of a development site

In case of young farmers, the applicant must:

- Be between 18 years and not more than 40 years at age of application
- Have not received grant-aid under a previous Installation Aid Scheme
- Meet the requirements of set-up for the first time within five years of application
- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 15ha land declared under PBS ,or in the case of horticulture enterprises, a minimum of 1ha
- Meet specific Educational Qualification
- Have effective control of holding

Pig and Poultry Investment

The applicant must:

- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 20 production units from pig or poultry
- Hold a Department identifier

Farm Nutrient Storage

The applicant must:

- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 5ha land declared under PBS or a minimum of 20 production units from intensive enterprise
- Hold a Department identifier

Animal Housing

The applicant must:

- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 5ha land declared under PBS or a minimum of 20 production units from intensive enterprise
- Hold a Department identifier
- As sector specific support is rolled out, the requirement to be a farmer in the relevant sector will be included in the terms and conditions.

Animal Welfare and Farm Safety

The applicant must:

- Have ownership or lease of a development site
- Have a minimum of 5ha land declared under PBS or a minimum of 20 production units from intensive enterprise
- Hold a Department identifier

Intensive enterprises are pigs, poultry, rabbits, protected horticultural crops and the production of nursery stock. The table below sets out how Production Units on the holding are calculated in order to meet the minimum 20 production units requirement. For example, a pig finishing enterprise with 400 pig places would equate to 24 production units on the basis of 100 pig units converting to 6 units as per the table.

In the case of the Organic Scheme proof of organic status will be required. Where appropriate, specific groups of farmers may be given preference in the selection criteria laid down under each strand of support under the measure. .

In several cases the measure will have to take account of existing EU requirements such as the Nitrates Directive (Directive 91/676) and the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60), and Council Regulation 834/2007 on organic production and labelling. For example in the case of applicants under the nutrient storage investments, no grants will be payable if the applicant is not in a position to prove that he/she is in compliance with existing EU requirements for example in the case of the Nitrates Directive (Directive 91/676).

All eligible applications must be in line with relevant environmental legislation.

Category of Intensive Enterprise	Conversion into Production Units
Sow Breeding only	0.8 units per 100 pig places
Sow Breeding and Finishing	1.1 units per 100 pig places
Pigs Finishing only	6.0 units per 100 pig places
Broilers	3.0 units per 1000 bird places
Broiler Breeders	8.0 units per 1000 birds
Layers	3.0 units per 1000 birds
Turkeys (fattening)	3.0 units per 1000 birds
Free Range Egg Production	1.5 units per 100 birds
Mushrooms	20 units per 30 metre tunnel
Glasshouse crops	125 units per hectare
Nursery (liner) production	75 units per hectare
Shrub production (containers)	50 units per hectare
Ornamental trees, field grown	25 units per hectare
Rabbits	1.0 unit per 100 does

Intensive enterprise table

8.2.3.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

The selection criteria will be set out following consultation with the RDP Monitoring Committee in accordance with Article 49 of Regulation EU No. 1305/2013. These selection criteria will be clearly transparent and made available to potential beneficiaries through the application forms and terms and conditions. They will be applied in a non discriminatory manner.

A point based system will apply with a minimum threshold for selection of operations/ projects. Points/marks will be allocated to applicants in accordance with the various specific selection criteria that will apply under each strand of support under the measure. Some common selection criteria are envisaged across the various strands of support under the measure. These could include:

- the size of holding/enterprise (specific marks will be awarded on a per hectare or per production unit basis, with marks allocated as scale increases)
- comparison of proposed costs with reference costs
- holding in an Area of Natural Constraint.

8.2.3.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

A general 40% rate of aid is available. However, this will be increased to 60% in the case of young farmers as defined in the relevant legislation. In order to ensure that the available budget is respected, a super ceiling

for investment of €80,000 per holding over the lifetime of the RDP is in place. In order to encourage the purchase by farmers of specialised low emissions slurry-spreading equipment, however, that particular strand of support under the measure is excluded from the application of the super-ceiling.

8.2.3.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.3.3.2.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

A number of risks can be associated with the implementation of the strands of support under the investment measure proposed under the new Programme, many of which were identified during the course of the 2007-1013 RDP. These risks include –

Provision of financial ceilings to strands of support under the measure :

There will be significant demand by farmers for the suite of investment supports proposed in the RDP. Whilst it is always difficult to gauge the likely demand for investment over a seven-year period, it is reasonable to assume that the value of applications, in grant terms, for many of the investment items proposed will exceed the financial allocation allocated to each strand of support under the measure within TAMS under the RDP.

Failure to complete investment works to correct technical specifications:

A risk under any investment measure is that applicants will not complete the investment works to the standards required by the Department.

Commencement of investment works prior to issue of approval.

A further risk which arises under the RDP is that farmers might commence the proposed investment works prior to the issue of Department approval.

A risk can arise in relation to the reasonableness of costs and it must be ensured that grant-aid is payable only on costs which are considered to be reasonable.

8.2.3.3.2.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

In the case of the risks identified above, the following mitigating actions will be taken as part of the control measures adopted as part of the RDP:-

Provision of limited financial allocations to strands of support under the measure :

In order to avoid the risk of possible financial exposure under the new investment supports over and above the amounts allocated, steps will be taken to ensure that the value, in grant terms, of approvals issued does not exceed the amount of funding available. (Or, where appropriate, within a certain level above that amount, in order to take account of those farmers who may not proceed with the approved investment).

In the case of each strand of support under the measure , a series of tranches, with fixed financial ceilings, will be opened in which all eligible applications received will be ranked in accordance with the relevant selection criteria applicable. Following the ranking of each application, approvals will only issue to farmers up to the appropriate level vis a vis the financial allocation available under the tranche concerned. Eligible applications which do not receive an approval in a particular tranche will be rolled forward for consideration under the following tranche.

Failure to complete investment works to correct specifications:

In conjunction with application forms, the Department is preparing new technical specifications or revising existing specifications in relation to the strands of support under the investment measure in the RDP. Assurance that investment works have been completed according to the Department's technical specifications will result from the on-the-spot inspections which will be carried out on investment works completed under the Programme. The control measures for each new measure will include a pre-determined level of on-the-spot pre-payment inspections where it will be verified that the Department's technical specifications have been fully complied with by the applicant. Where the investment works involve the construction of buildings, a programme of on-the-spot visits will also take place whilst the works are being carried out, for example to ensure that foundations have been completed appropriately.

Commencement of investment works prior to issue of approval:

Checks to ensure that works have not commenced prior to their approval will be included as part of a pre-approval inspection regime which will also be introduced under the Rural Development Programme. Where appropriate, such checks will be carried out on a risk analysis basis.

In relation to ensuring reasonableness of costs, the use of the system set out in the 'methodology for calculation of the support rate' section below is the mitigating action.

8.2.3.3.2.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. Appropriate desk and field based checks have been incorporated.

8.2.3.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

A system of reference costs will be put in place under each strand of support under the measure in order to ensure that grant-aid is payable only on costs which are considered to be reasonable. Under each strand of support under the measure, applicants will be required to include their proposed costs for each investment item set out in the grant application. In some instances, it may be decided to make use of the flexibility provided under the simplified costs provisions to operate solely on a standard costs basis, while in other cases, a combination of reference costs and receipted costs will be applied. Where Simplified Cost Options are used, the relevant amounts will be publicly available prior to the launch of the relevant Scheme.

In situations where a combination of reference costs and receipted costs apply, the grant amount will be calculated on the basis of the lowest of the following three amounts:

- The proposed costs indicated by the applicant;
- The Department's reference costs;
- The eligible amount of receipted costs submitted by the applicant.

The reference costs are developed as a maximum ceiling that can be paid for grant-aided buildings and equipment. For equipment that needs to be installed to operate, the reference cost calculated must also cover the cost of installation. The reference costs are independently calculated by the Engineering Unit of the Nitrates, Bio-diversity and Engineering Division.

The reference costs are calculated by undertaking the following:

- CSO construction index figures shall be obtained for the period being reviewed to act as a guide for the potential expected increases in the prices of equipment and buildings.
- Where relevant, receipted costs shall be downloaded from the TAMS computer system to compare the actual claimed costs for the relevant items over the preceding year with the reference costs.
- Quotations shall be obtained from at least three separate reputable supplier companies for each item that reference costs are being developed for. Once all of the quotations have been received, the average cost is calculated for each item. This ensures that the average obtained is reflective of the

true market cost of the items.

8.2.3.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of non productive investments

Not applicable.

Definition of collective investments

Registered Farm Partnerships and legal persons are allowed to participate in each of the strands of support under the measure, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria. However, there is no higher aid intensity provided for collective investments.

Definition of integrated projects

Not applicable.

Definition and identification of the eligible Natura 2000 sites and other eligible areas of high nature value

Not applicable.

Description of the targeting of the support to farms in accordance with the SWOT carried out in relation to the priority referred to in Article 5(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The measure is a targeted one in accordance with the SWOT analysis and public consultation which identified a need for capital investment over a wide range of investments. The areas prioritised for investment under the measure will contribute to a number of central themes in the farming sector. This has facilitated strategic targeting on a thematic and a sectoral basis as set out in the description of the Measure.

The setting of selection criteria is a further channel through which support can be better targeted, For example, in relation to the specific Animal Housing strand of support under the measure, this will be further targeted via a combination of the following:

- Competitiveness - on the basis of costs proposed and used as part of the assessment process,
- Region - more points for Areas of Natural Constraints,
- Size of holding - Specific marks will be awarded on a per hectare or per production unit basis, with marks allocated as scale increases.

List of new requirements imposed by Union legislation for complying with which support may be granted under Article 17(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Not applicable.

Where relevant, the minimum standards for energy efficiency referred to in Article 13(c) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

Where relevant, definition of the thresholds referred to in Article 13(e) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

8.2.3.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.3.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.3.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.3.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.3.5. *Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant*

As referenced above.

8.2.3.6. *Information specific to the measure*

Definition of non productive investments

Not applicable.

Definition of collective investments

Not applicable.

Definition of integrated projects

Not applicable.

Definition and identification of the eligible Natura 2000 sites and other eligible areas of high nature value

Not applicable.

Description of the targeting of the support to farms in accordance with the SWOT carried out in relation to the priority referred to in Article 5(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Not applicable.

List of new requirements imposed by Union legislation for complying with which support may be granted under Article 17(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Not applicable.

Where relevant, the minimum standards for energy efficiency referred to in Article 13(c) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

Where relevant, definition of the thresholds referred to in Article 13(e) of Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014

Not applicable.

8.2.3.7. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

Not applicable.



8.2.4. M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)

8.2.4.1. *Legal basis*

Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Basic Services and Village Renewal in Rural Areas) .

8.2.4.2. *General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives*

This measure will contribute to Focus Area 4A – Biodiversity, HNV farming and landscapes.

The GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings measure will build upon the success of the Heritage Buildings Scheme which operated under REPS 4 (2007 -2013 RDP). The objective of this measure is to ensure that small traditional farm buildings and other structures, which are of significant cultural and heritage value, are restored and conserved for renewed practical agricultural use as part of the normal working life of the farm. Domestic dwellings, currently in occupation or intended for occupation, are not included.

There are various multi-functional benefits which will arise as a result of this measure in areas such as landscape, biodiversity, climate change, enhancement of traditional skills and contribution to the broader rural economy.

Although changes in farming practices have left many old farm buildings underused, they remain a valued feature in the landscape and their conservation allows these buildings to remain in active use on the farm. Primarily, the measure seeks to enhance the significant positive contribution that traditional farm buildings make to the Irish rural landscape.

Additionally, these traditional buildings can be important habitats in their own right, particularly for certain protected wildlife species, such as bats and birds. The cross compliance with wildlife legislation will ensure the discovery and conservation of protected wildlife species roosting in these buildings, thereby creating a holistic approach to the management of the built and natural environment.

Environmental benefits will be further enhanced as restoration of these old buildings to functional use produces fewer GHG emissions and reduces the amount of material to be sent to landfill when compared with new buildings.

The measure will also help to ensure continued knowledge amongst the farm population of traditional building materials and techniques. Many of the older farm buildings were laid out using local tried and tested materials and built to patterns and arrangements that made optimum use of resources and have harmonised over time with their settings. It is possible to foster the passing on of traditional skills through empowering owners and allowing them to continue to be the curators or guardians of these buildings. These skills are then available locally for other buildings, both on- and off –farm. The project buildings serve as exemplars for the repair of others on the farm, and indeed in the rural locality

Lastly, the measure will also contribute to the broader rural economy. It will indirectly provide employment in rural areas for professionals and local contractors and materials suppliers.

The measure will be delivered in a manner consistent with planning processes at a local Government level

in accordance with article 20.3 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013.

8.2.4.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.4.3.1. GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme

Sub-measure:

- 7.6 - support for studies/investments associated with the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of villages, rural landscapes and high nature value sites including related socio-economic aspects, as well as environmental awareness actions

8.2.4.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

The measure will provide once-off grant aid for approved conservation work to traditional farm buildings and associated structures. All traditional buildings which are now used for agricultural purposes, or available for such use, will be considered as part of the measure. Works, which will focus on ensuring long term structural integrity, should be carried out using traditional building techniques and materials to ensure continued visual appeal and cultural value.

Applicants will submit details of proposed conservation projects, including an estimate of costs, which will then be assessed by an expert selection committee. As part of the conservation works, the habitat value of the buildings concerned will also be assessed and protected.

It is intended to use a similar structure to that which was in place for the Heritage Buildings Scheme which operated under REPS 4 in the 2007 -2013 RDP. Therefore, the measure will be administered on behalf of DAFM by The Heritage Council, a statutory body whose function it is to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

8.2.4.3.1.2. Type of support

Support will be by way of grants to carry out approved conservation work to small farm buildings and associated structures (historic yard surfaces, landscape features around the farmyard – walls, gate pillars, gates, millraces).

8.2.4.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, Habitats and Birds Directives, relevant planning and development legislation.

8.2.4.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

GLAS (Measure 10) participants are the potential beneficiaries.

8.2.4.3.1.5. Eligible costs

As with the preceding scheme under REPS 4, the approach taken is flexible in enabling costs to be tailored to the needs of the project concerned. The maximum grant in any individual case will not exceed 75% of total costs up to a maximum grant of €25,000.

However, eligible costs will be in line with Articles 45.2(a) and 45.2(c) of Regulation EU No. 1305/2013 and Article 65 of Regulation EU No. 1303/2013. These eligible costs will relate to “the improvement of immovable property”.

8.2.4.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

This is a complementary measure to GLAS, intended to encourage a holistic approach which increases understanding and management of both the natural and built/cultural heritage present on individual farms. Accordingly, participation in GLAS is the prime eligibility condition.

8.2.4.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

All applications will be reviewed by a specially convened selection committee who will make their decisions based on a matrix for scoring the value of each application with reference to landscape and biodiversity benefits arising, mitigation of climate change, value for money and geographical spread.

8.2.4.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Each project will be costed individually. The maximum allowable support will be 75% of total costs, up to a maximum grant of €25,000.

8.2.4.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.4.3.1.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

Risks here include

- The possibility of the supported work not being carried out to completion
- Risks in relation to the quality of work carried out

- Risks related to the relevance of costs claimed.

8.2.4.3.1.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

An annual inspection scheme has been in place for the Heritage Buildings Scheme which operated under REPS 4 and has proven to be very successful. A similar system will form the basis for risk mitigation in this Measure. Pre- and post-inspection of each project will be carried out and a full photographic record kept. Applicants will also be required to submit an interim report including photographs. The applicant's conservation professional will sign-off on costs being claimed, and only costs relating to the agreed works can be claimed. Following final inspection, and if the applicant has complied with all grant conditions, the Heritage Council will recommend that the Department pay the grant. DAFM will also carry out checks on 5% of projects approved by the Heritage Council.

8.2.4.3.1.9.3. *Overall assessment of the measure*

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.4.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

The Heritage Council will assess whether costs are appropriate to the works necessary. All applicants must submit an estimate of costs at application stage. The Heritage Council will assemble a panel of approximately 6 conservation/heritage professionals to assess shortlisted grants. If the panel considers that works are not properly costed, the Heritage Council will write to the applicant to request the submission of revised estimates on the works that can be supported.

8.2.4.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of small scale infrastructure, including small scale tourism infrastructure as referred to in Article 20(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Notwithstanding that this measure is programmed under article 20.1.f, small scale infrastructure is defined as small traditional farm buildings, ancillary to the main dwelling, and other associated structures such as historic yard surfaces and landscape features around the farmyard.

If applicable, specific derogation allowing to support bigger scale infrastructure for investments in broad band and renewable energy

Not applicable.

Information on the application of the grace period referred to in Article 2(3) of Delegated Regulation No 807/2014

Not applicable.

Definition of the thresholds referred to in Article 13(e) of [DA RD – C(2014)1460]

Not applicable.

8.2.4.4. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.4.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.4.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.4.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.4.5. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

As referenced above.

8.2.4.6. Information specific to the measure

Definition of small scale infrastructure, including small scale tourism infrastructure as referred to in Article 20(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

As referenced above.

If applicable, specific derogation allowing to support bigger scale infrastructure for investments in broad band and renewable energy

Not applicable.

Information on the application of the grace period referred to in Article 2(3) of Delegated Regulation No 807/2014

Not applicable.

Definition of the thresholds referred to in Article 13(e) of [DA RD – C(2014)1460]

Not applicable.

8.2.4.7. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

n/a

8.2.5. M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)

8.2.5.1. Legal basis

Article 28 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Agri-environment-climate)

8.2.5.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

This Measure contains the following two submeasures

- 10.1, payment for agri-environment-climate commitments – the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)
- 10.1, payment for agri-environment-climate commitments – the Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

The Measure will contribute to the following Focus Areas

- 4A – restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas
- 4B – improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management
- 4C – preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D – reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture
- 5E – carbon conservation and sequestration.

In order to support the efficient and effective implementation of the Measure, targeted training has been designed for both GLAS and BDGP. While this training is linked to the logic underlying GLAS and BDGP the details of this training are set out in Measure 1 where the funding is also allocated.

The premia calculated for the two submeasures are based on compensation for costs incurred and income foregone. In certain cases, partial compensation is foreseen

Each submeasure sets out the relevant contract period. The possibility for the conversion or adjustment of commitments, including the extension of the duration of the commitment as provided for under Article 14 of Commission Regulation 807/2014 is foreseen.

Given the structure of Measure 10, there will be farmers who are beneficiaries under both GLAS and BDGP. In such cases, there may be cases where commitments under both sub measures overlap. However, given the clear environmental benefits arising and the multifaceted nature of these benefits (in keeping with the strong environmental focus of Ireland's RDP) the ceiling set for annual payments under Measure 10 in Annex II of Regulation 1305/2013 can be increased in such cases. There are also situations where a combination of GLAS actions on a given parcel may have a similar result. Again, given the separate but complementary environmental impacts of these the ceiling set for annual payments under Measure 10 in Annex II of Regulation 1305/2013 can be increased in such cases.

In relation to the revision clauses under Article 48, please see Section 8.1.

Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

Agriculture is a significant constituent of the Irish economy with ruminant livestock representing the bulk of Irish agricultural output. Ireland has the fourth largest beef cow herd in the EU and specialist beef production is the predominant type of farming enterprise in the country.

The agriculture sector overall contributes 32% to Ireland's total national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions which is by far the highest among EU member states; the average agri emissions across the EU is approximately 10%. The high level of agri emissions in Ireland is mainly associated with our large ruminant herd. Within this, excluding dairy production, other cattle (i.e. beef) account for approx 50% of agricultural GHG emissions. In light of this, Ireland has been seeking to put in place measures that seek to reduce GHG emissions from the agri sector (and the beef sector in particular) in an innovative manner. Within this RDP, a range of actions are supported in this context – from supports for knowledge transfer related to GHG to a number of focused actions within the GLAS and Measure 4 (TAMS). However, the BDGP sets out to target the suckler herd specifically in attempting to put in place a broad based and strategic approach to GHG emissions in the agri – sector.

Breeding strategies followed by the suckler beef sector have focused on improving the terminal traits of progeny in response to market demands. Terminal traits such as carcass weight and conformation have been improving steadily in response to market demand for efficient and high output beef animals. However, this has been to the detriment of maternal/efficiency traits such as fertility and milk yield which are equally important but for which there is no clear market signal.

Research in Ireland has demonstrated that introducing genetically superior animals in terms of improved maternal traits (e.g. with shorter calving intervals, calving at a younger age, and producing heavier weanlings) can lead to measurable reductions in GHG output. In the preparatory analysis undertaken in designing the BDGP, GHG savings of between 92kt and 300kt were calculated. There are also a range of other associated additional climate benefits such as the production of lighter cows better suited to climate change adaptation, improved cow survivability and reduced replacement rates.

As a result, a key national policy priority is to encourage better uptake of efficient breeding stock with a greater emphasis on the maternal traits which can deliver more climate efficient animals, and, consequently, reduced GHG emissions .

Accordingly, the Beef Data and Genomics Programme has been designed to deliver these targeted climate change benefits. This will be done via data collection and the introduction of innovative genomic technologies in the suckler herd which will aid the identification and selection of the desired multi-trait breeding stock.

The Programme requires beneficiaries to undertake a range of actions designed to deliver accelerated genetic improvement in the quality of the beef herd and, as a result, the associated climate benefits. The establishment and maintenance of a large scale data collection system is central to the approach; this will be done through the collection of data from commercial suckler cow herds. This then feeds into a genomics based breeding index (which ranks the efficiency of animals on a star based system, with 5 star being the most efficient) which will inform farmers in selecting robust and resource efficient suckler cow and bull replacements. Collecting data centrally across all farms and breeds allows for a more rapid increase in the

reliability of the index.

To further support the realisation of this genetic potential, the linked knowledge transfer proposals in Measure 1 will improve farmer understanding as regards the use of genomics, data collection, and breeding selection with a view to delivering the GHG reduction envisaged. Measure 1 will also provide for training for the initial completion of the Carbon Navigator which will then form a central plank of the BDGP over the 6 years of the Programme. The Carbon Navigator has been developed to promote the uptake of carbon-efficient farming practices and demonstrates, for the scheme participant, the level of emissions from his/her farm, and sets indicative targets for reducing GHG emissions. It focuses on length of grazing season, age at first calving, calving rate, growth rate, nitrogen efficiency and slurry management.

It is intended that the Beef Data and Genomics Programme will serve as a 'kick-start' to the widespread application of genomics in the suckler herd over the 6 years of the Programme and a renewed focus on a multi-trait breeding strategy that more fully incorporates maternal traits. It is expected that the use of these practices would become self-sustaining in future programming periods.

Given the innovative nature of this support, DAFM will provide for an independent evaluation of the Programme at mid-term which will evaluate the roll out of the technologies with reference to issues such as take up rates and the cost structure of the Programme. In addition, the operation, cost structure, and take-up of the scheme will be subject to ongoing review and modification as appropriate (See Section 9 – Evaluation Plan).

G.L.A.S. (Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme) and GLAS+

The proposed new GLAS scheme adopts an integrated approach to achieving objectives under Article 28 of the Rural Development Regulation and ties in with the green vision for Irish agriculture as contained in Food Harvest 2020 and as promoted by Bord Bia in the Origin Green campaign. The scheme is green as it preserves our traditional hay meadows and low input pastures, low-carbon as it retains the carbon stocks in soil through margins and habitat preservation and practices such as minimum tillage, and agri-environment as it promotes agricultural actions which introduce or continue to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation.

The inclusion of an agri-environment climate measure is compulsory under the Rural Development Regulation. GLAS will deliver overarching benefits in terms of the rural environment whilst addressing the issues of climate change mitigation, water quality and the preservation of priority habitats and species.

GLAS has been designed to achieve the delivery of targeted environmental advice and best practice at farm level. It aims to work within the framework for environmental sustainability as set down by the following EU Directives and national and international targets:

- The EU Climate Change and Renewable Energy Package and the Kyoto Protocol.
- The Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive and the Nitrates Directive
- The Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the European target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020.

This measure also takes into account the need for a targeted Agri-Environmental Scheme highlighted in the

Environmental Analysis of Food Harvest 2020.

The outcome from the public consultation and the SWOT analysis demonstrated a broad need for a targeted agri-environment scheme to include emphasis on Natura 2000 sites and on water quality. Well-designed, targeted, monitored and managed measures will contribute to meeting Ireland's objectives under the Rural Development Programme and also the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, EU Habitats and Birds Directives, Water Framework Directives and Climate Change.

The structure of GLAS responds to the needs identified in the SWOT analysis. Designated Natura 2000 land within the farmed environment comprises in the main of land in agricultural production, and the integration of both Natura and agri-environment measures within GLAS will result in administrative and output efficiencies. The targeted approach will permeate down to farm level where individual farmers will be required to address environmental priorities specific to the holding.

GLAS is a highly targeted scheme. Key to its design is the identification of a number of **Priority Environmental Assets** – primarily vulnerable landscapes (inc Natura and uplands), species at risk (primarily endangered birds), and high-quality watercourses. All holdings with these physical assets have been pre-identified and the areas of importance mapped at farm level. Presence of one or more of these assets on any farm guarantees priority access to the new scheme, but in return all required actions to protect and enhance these assets, as laid down by the Irish authorities, must be accepted on foot of standard payment-packages offered to the applicant. Environmental assets and actions of lesser importance have also been identified, and these can be addressed once the over-riding objective of addressing the Priority Environmental Assets has been met.

In addition, it is envisaged that, within the limits of budget availability, some farmers who undertake particularly challenging actions or who are compelled to take on a high number of compulsory actions, may qualify for a higher package- payment of up to €2,000 per annum under what is known as GLAS+. GLAS+ is targeted at farmers who have to undertake a high number of mandatory actions under the Tier 1 Priority Environmental Assets and Actions as set out in the Tier table for GLAS (see below), but will automatically include those managing endangered bird habitat.

Ireland's main farming system is grassland based livestock and dairy production with approximately 8% of land in tillage. The range of actions proposed responds to the identified needs in the areas of water quality, climate change, biodiversity and Natura 2000. New actions specifically for tillage farmers have been included in order to encourage uptake and to increase the number of actions contributing to climate change objectives.

All applicants will be required to engage the services of a advisor in the preparation of their application and successful applicants will be required to have a nutrient management plan prepared for the farm. The importance of training to ensure proper delivery of commitments and to protect against the occurrence of error rates is also recognised and training modules in environmentally sustainable framing practices will be delivered under the knowledge transfer measure.

It is envisaged that the approach outlined above will lead to the achievement of significant environmental benefits. However, the Irish authorities reiterate their intention to bring forward plans for a separate locally-led measure, targeting specific challenges of key environmental importance requiring individual design solutions. These include protection of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and expansion of the Burren Farming for Conservation Project, and further focus on the needs of the hen harrier. The proposed measure will include a competitive element, based on periodic calls for proposals, with conservation/restoration of upland peats specifically included.

8.2.5.3. *Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria*

8.2.5.3.1. Beef Data and Genomics Programme

Sub-measure:

- 10.1 - payment for agri-environment-climate commitments

8.2.5.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

The BDGP will entail farmers undertaking a 6 year commitment to carry out a pre defined set of actions designed to underpin the delivery of a more climate friendly suckler herd. These actions are set out below.

Record Keeping and Event Recording

Participating farmers will be obliged to record specific animal events data, such as:

- For each calf born in the herd: sire details, calving ease, docility, vitality, size, quality and health traits
- For cows: milk score, docility and culling reasons
- For bulls: docility, functionality and culling reasons

This data will be combined with genomic information for use in genetic evaluation to determine an economic breeding value (Eurostar rating) for each animal. Farmers have to then base the selection of sires and replacement heifers on the Eurostar rating to improve the genetic merit of his/her herd. The data collected will also include questions on animal health to improve aggregate national data on herd health.

Genotyping

Participating farmers will be obliged to genotype priority animals in his/her herd. This will involve taking a tissue sample from the selected animals. This tissue sample will then be submitted for DNA extraction and subsequent genotyping.

The measure will oblige participant farmers to undertake a core set of actions to include:

- Using tissue tags to take samples from animals selected for testing by the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation;
- Sending selected samples for DNA extraction/genotyping;

The number of animals each year to be tested will equal to 60% of the number of reference animals on the farm.

Separately, Measure 1 will also include training for the farmer outlining how to interpret and utilise the data returned to the beneficiary following the submission of data and DNA.

Replacement Strategy

Following on from the collection of sufficient information to allow for the development of a reliable genomic breeding index, it is vital for the success of the Programme that the animals identified as being of superior genetic merit, with lower associated GHG emissions, are then utilised as replacement stock on participating herds. This measure will require beneficiaries to introduce replacement animals as follows:

- Beneficiary herds must use a genotyped 4 or 5 star bull (or use equivalent AI) by the end of the 6 year programme.
- By the end of the programme, 50% of female replacement animals in the beneficiary herd must be animals genotyped 4 or 5 stars on the maternal index.

It is not proposed to pay for the replacement of animals. The cost assigned for the Replacement Strategy only covers the additional net cost of this action, primarily the income foregone for that farmer from retaining animals on his/her herd which would otherwise have obtained a higher price on the market relative to replacement stock of a lower genetic merit. Where the replacement must be sourced outside the herd, this represents the additional **net** cost incurred of purchasing an animal of higher genetic merit over and above what the farmer would otherwise purchase.

Carbon Navigator

Each participant must complete the Carbon Navigator. There are two elements to this.

BDGP beneficiaries will receive expert coaching to assist them in both (i) retrieving the required information for completion of the Carbon Navigator and (ii) interacting with the Carbon Navigator using the information inputted and the resulting outcomes displayed. This will be delivered via Measure 1.

Following the initial completion of the Carbon Navigator through Measure 1, beneficiaries under this measure will be required to provide information for the annual completion of the Carbon Navigator so as to allow for continuous annual assessment of farming practices relative to the Carbon Navigator reports developed each year.

In addition to the above actions, and as noted above, beneficiaries will be required to undergo tailored training in order to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the BDGP. This targeted training is detailed in and supported via Measure 1.

8.2.5.3.1.2. Type of support

An annual payment will be made to each farmer who meets the requirements of the BDGP. Each scheme participant will sign up to a six-year contract to cover the lifetime of the BDGP.

8.2.5.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.5.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

The scheme will target active suckler farmers.

8.2.5.3.1.5. Eligible costs

The costs have been calculated based on the cost incurred and income foregone associated with undertaking the eligible actions underlying the scheme. Costs are measured in units of time required to complete the actions, the cost of genotyping, or the net additional cost of replacement animals as explained in section 8.2.4.3.1.1. In calculating the costs, all elements that would impact on improved productivity (and thus possibly give rise to revenue) have been deducted from the amount of support. Transaction costs have also been included in the calculation of costs.

The number of actions payable under this scheme in each year is based on the number of suckler cows calving in each herd during 2014 ("reference animals"), with a provision for 2015 to be used as an alternative base year where 2014 would not be appropriate (e.g. for new entrants).

A co-efficient of 1.5 LU/ha is used in order to convert the number of "reference animals" into the number of hectares eligible for the scheme. These will be the "reference hectares" for payment under the BDGP in each of the 6 years. The "reference hectares" remain stable throughout the scheme. A farmer who has a number of hectares in his/her possession which is inferior to the number of "reference hectares" calculated, will still be eligible for participation in the scheme, but will only receive payment for the number of hectares he/she actually possesses.

In accordance with Article 47 of Regulation 1305/2013, a farmer's number of eligible hectares under this scheme may vary from year to year. The maximum variation allowed in this regard is a 20% decrease compared to the initially defined "reference hectares".

8.2.5.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

All applicants must have a herd number and possess registered beef breed animals.

Applicants must submit a Basic Payment Scheme application form for each year of the programme on which all land parcels are declared

Applicants will be ineligible where persistently infected (PI) Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) animals born since 1st January 2012 have not been removed from the herd with the exception of those animals which, on the date of the application, are within 7 weeks of the date of the initial test.

Furthermore, all animals with a current positive or inconclusive BVD test result must be removed to the knackery on an ongoing basis and have a date of death recorded on the Animal Identification Movement (AIM) system within 7 weeks of the date of the initial test.

8.2.5.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

The scheme will be open to all registered suckler beef farmers who commit to completing in full the mandatory actions under the scheme over the full duration of the Programme.

In the event of the measure being oversubscribed, selection of beneficiaries will be based on criteria designed to achieve the best climate return and may include:

- Previous engagement in delivery of DAFM schemes in the suckler cow herd;
- New entrants to suckler farming;
- Holding size.
- Previous engagement in the Agri-Environment Scheme AEOS, from the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme

8.2.5.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

The rates payable under the BDGP are based on the costings assigned to all the actions required which have then been converted to an eligible hectare based payment using a stocking density coefficient. In addition to these costs, the possible economic benefits arising from the BDGP have been factored in. This has resulted in a final net payment of €142.50 for the first 6.666 eligible hectares operated by the beneficiary.

A degressive payment of €120 will apply on the remaining eligible hectares. This degressivity is introduced with a view to achieving maximum value for money from expenditure under the scheme and reflects the economies of scale which will arise on farms with a higher number of animals / eligible hectares. This approach is based DAFM's experience in administering schemes across the sector and the preparatory work which underlies the calculation of the relevant costs. For example, as familiarity with data recording requirements increases this will lead to efficiencies in undertaking this action when undertaken with greater frequency. Similarly, efficiencies will in the farmer undertaking the Carbon Navigator actions on a greater scale.

Participants under this measure will also benefit from support under Measure 01 (Knowledge Transfer) in the form of both BDGP training and initial completion of the Carbon Navigator.

8.2.5.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.5.3.1.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

The risks related to the scheme include:

- Submission of incomplete information;
- Reduced pool of replacement 4 and 5 star maternal heifers/bulls where suitable animals are sent for slaughter rather than placed on the market for breeding;
- Failure of beneficiaries to understand or utilise the information provided through the measure to make optimal breeding decisions;

- Failure to complete carbon navigator or attend training course
- Large clawbacks where the replacement requirement is not adhered to at the end of the programme

8.2.5.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

The following steps will be taken in order to mitigate the risks under the measure as follows:

- Cross checks will be conducted with the DAFM herd register & the Animal Identification and Movement (AIM) system;
- The requirement to remove all PI infected animals will be verified using the AHCS system;
- A helpsheet will issue with application forms and Terms and Conditions along with an information campaign which will coincide with the application process to ensure applicants are aware of the obligations under the scheme;
- Detailed training and ongoing supply of information will ensure improved beneficiary awareness of the value of genomics and the importance of making suitable replacement animals available;
- A percentage of applications will be selected for on-the spot control visit.
- Audits of breeding data
- Audits of genotyping data

8.2.5.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.5.3.1.10. Information specific to the operation

Identification and definition of the relevant baseline elements; this shall include the relevant mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1) (c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and other relevant mandatory requirements established by national law

Referenced elsewhere.

The minimum requirements for fertilisers must include, inter alia, the Codes of Good Practice introduced under Directive 91/676/EEC for farms outside Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, and requirements concerning phosphorous pollution; the minimum requirements for plant protection products use must include, inter alia, general principles for integrated pest management introduced by Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, requirements to have a licence to use the products and meet training obligations, requirements on safe storage, the checking of application machinery and rules on pesticide use close to water and other sensitive sites, as established by national legislation

Referenced elsewhere.

List of local breeds in danger of being lost to farming and of plant genetic resources under threat of genetic erosion

Not applicable.

Description of the methodology and of the agronomic assumptions and parameters including the description of the baseline requirements as referred to in Article 29(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which are relevant for each particular type of commitment used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs, income foregone resulting from the commitment made and level of the transaction costs; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account aid granted under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, including payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment, in order to exclude double funding; where appropriate, the conversion method used for other units in accordance with Article 9 of this Regulation

Referenced elsewhere.

8.2.5.3.2. G.L.A.S. (Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme) and GLAS+

Sub-measure:

- 10.1 - payment for agri-environment-climate commitments

8.2.5.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

Tiered structure

- GLAS has a **three tier hierarchy**, with Tier 1 receiving priority over Tier 2, and Tier 2 over Tier 3. This structure is designed to ensure the targeted and prioritised delivery of environmental benefits drawing from the extensive preparatory analysis underlying the RDP. Tier Table (below) provides full details.
- **Tier 1** is the most important Tier, comprising in Tier 1(a) of all the Priority Environmental Assets identified for support through GLAS, targeting vulnerable landscapes, species at risk and protection of high-status watercourses. Tier 1(b) also identifies a series of Priority Environmental Actions for intensive farmers, targeting climate change mitigation and farmland birds. (Intensive farmers are classified as having a whole farm stocking rate exceeding 140kg Livestock Manure Nitrogen per hectare (produced on holding) or more than 30 hectares of arable crops). Organic farmers also receive priority access to the scheme under Tier 1 in their own right. It is envisaged that at least 60% of all participants in GLAS will be drawn from Tier 1 as whole, and that 80-90% of the available funds will be targeted here as well.
- **Tier 2** is the next most important tier and focuses in Tier 2(a) on water-quality, through protection of predetermined vulnerable water-courses, while also accepting proposals under Tier 2(b) from other farmers who are prepared to take on predetermined actions again targeting climate change mitigation and supporting farmland birds.
- **Tier 3** is largely a feeder menu of complementary environmental actions for applicants approved into Tiers 1 and 2. It consists of actions such as the protection of traditional hay meadows, species-rich pastures, important landscape features like archaeological monuments, hedgerows and stone-walls, as well as provision of bird, bat and bee nesting facilities and the planting of small groves of native trees. Applications based entirely upon Tier 3 actions will also be invited.
- There is an internal hierarchy within GLAS of '**Assets over Actions**'. For example, in the case of Tier 1, expenditure will be targeted at the Priority Environmental Assets first (*Tier 1a*) before accepting intake from 'intensive' farmers adopting the Priority Environmental Actions (*Tier 1b*). Budgetary management over the Programme period is in place to maintain this prioritisation.
- The actions proposed under GLAS include a number of 'integrated' actions which incorporate non-productive capital investments as set out in M4.4. These include bee, bird and bat boxes, planting new hedgerows, traditional orchards, planting a grove of native trees, laying or coppicing hedgerows, Twite B, Grey Partridge, riparian margins and conservation of the solitary bee.

Tier Table for GLAS

Recruitment process

- Intake for **Tier 1(a)** will be structured on the basis of a 'package' offered to eligible candidates on foot of predetermined areas, predetermined actions and predetermined populations, with maximum package-values of **€5,000** and **€7,000** (the latter under what is known as GLAS+, where particularly

demanding environmental commitments are required). Candidates in Tier 1(a) who conserve small areas of important PEAs, but attract a payment of less than €5,000, may (but are not required to) select additional complementary actions from Tier 3 to bring their commitment in line with the total package of €5,000. Our projections are to attract some 25-30,000 farmers under Tier 1(a).

- Intake for **Tier 1(b)** will be structured on the basis of a package offered to eligible candidates on foot of predetermined populations with predetermined characteristics and again requiring commitment to predetermined actions. The maximum package-value in this case is **€5,000**. As with Tier 1(a) candidates attracting a payment of less than €5,000 may (but are not required to) select additional complementary actions from Tier 3 to bring their commitment in line with the total package of €5,000. Despite the size of the potential pool of applicants (c.20,000), it is not expected that intake will be numerically significant: national targets are to attract about 5,000 in all. This a relatively small proportion of the overall intake projected for GLAS (50,000) but significant in terms of the cohort being targeted, which consists of a pool of farmers who do not usually consider AECM schemes as relevant to them. However, in the event that the call is oversubscribed, selection criteria will be employed. The principles underpinning selection are shown separately.
- Intake for **Tier 2(a)** and **(b)** will follow the same recruitment model, but with maximum package values of **€5,000** in each case. In the case of Tier 2, and for both category (a) and (b) applications, selection criteria will be employed if the call is oversubscribed. The principles underpinning selection are shown separately.
- Subject to availability of funds, independent intake from **Tier 3** may be accepted. Intake will be recruited on the basis of proposals from individual holdings based on a maximum package value of **€5,000** per holding. All applications will then be assessed on the basis of predefined selection criteria designed to rank proposals in order of environmental merit. The principles underpinning selection are shown separately.
- The overall approach is a cascading one, as articulated through the Tier 1, 2 and 3 structure, and the overarching principle is designed to meet thematic environmental priorities. In effect, those proposals meeting the criteria for Tier 1 will be ranked first, with Tier 2 and 3 following sequentially.
- To ensure a continued balance between European Commission priorities over the period of the programme, these priorities and the order in which they are filled may be varied, for each tranche of applications.

Core requirements

In the first instance all farmers in GLAS must comply with the following list of core requirements: :

- a. An approved agricultural advisor must prepare the GLAS application.
- b. A Nutrient Management Plan for whole farm must be prepared in the first year of participation.
- c. Knowledge transfer by means of a training course for specific actions complemented by on-line demonstrations/advice on good environmental practices.
- d. Record-keeping.

These are mandatory scheme conditions but are not construed as eligibility criteria in themselves. The aim is to ensure that all proposals are designed and presented to the highest standard, by a trained professional, and that farmers achieve an enhanced level of environmental knowledge, evidenced by attendance at dedicated training modules, and records kept of actions delivered, underpinned by an overall plan for nutrient resource efficiency on their holding. Items (a), (b) and (d) represent unpaid commitments on the part of the GLAS participant, except in relation to Commonages, and Farmland Habitat (privately-owned

Natura) where the adviser input is factored into the proposed per-hectare payment. In the case of (c), these training courses are being developed and funded under M1, and will include an allowance to each participant to cover time/replacement labour and travel costs.

Other requirements

- All **Bird PEAs** will automatically qualify for the higher package of €7,000 without the need for combination with another PEA. However, in the case of the Hen Harrier, specific consideration will be given to the possibility of an additional support mechanism under the planned Locally-Led measure, which would target those farmers managing large tracts of Hen Harrier habitat (in excess of 20 hectares).
- In relation to the **Low Impact Slurry Spreading** action, take-up of this action will be specifically assessed as part of the monitoring/evaluation process, having regard to the fact that the technology has already evolved into a baseline requirement in some Member States.
- Actions involving **reduced fertiliser inputs** will be supported by way of ongoing advisory supports, as well as compulsory mid-cycle review of the Nutrient Management Plan, and reactive review should the farming system or intensity change at any time.
- The Irish authorities commit to reviewing the effectiveness of its proposals in terms of attracting proposals after the first phase of recruitment to GLAS, including the commonage and bird PEAs.

Other requirements for commonages and peatlands included under point 8.2.5.3.2.10 due to space limit here.

OBJECTIVE: GLAS aims to address the cross-cutting objectives of climate change, water quality and biodiversity.	
CORE	Core Management Requirements All of these requirements are compulsory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An approved agricultural planner must prepare the GLAS application Nutrient Management Planning Training in environmental practices and standards Record keeping of actions delivered
PRIORITY	TIER 1 Priority Environmental Assets and Actions Tier 1(a) All farmers with PEAs get first priority access to the Scheme in Year One and subsequent years. If any of these Priority Assets are applicable to the holding, they must be chosen and the relevant actions planned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmland Habitat (private Natura sites) Farmland Birds (Twite, Breeding Waders, Chough, Geese/swans, Corncrake, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier) Commonages (50% target participation in GLAS Commonage Plan) High Status Water Area Rare Breeds Tier 1(b) If an applicant (whether beef, sheep or dairy) with a whole farm stocking-rate exceeding 140kg Livestock Manure Nitrogen per hectare produced on the holding, or any farmer with more than 30 ha of arable crops, wishes to be considered under Tier 1, s/he must adopt at least one of the following four mandatory actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Tillage (arable farm >30ha) Catch crops Establishment from a Sown Crop (arable farm >30ha) Low Emission Slurry Spreading (livestock farm >140kg N/ha only) Wild Bird Cover (livestock farm > 140kg N/ ha only) Registered Organic farmers will qualify for priority access to the scheme under Tier 1(b), by selecting actions appropriate to the farm. However, if any of the assets listed in the first set of bullet-points above apply, they must be chosen first. Commitments under the Organic Farming Scheme will not qualify for payment under GLAS. It is not guaranteed that all eligible applicants in Tier 1(b) will get into the Scheme and a scoring matrix will apply if necessary.

Glas Tier table part 1

SECONDARY	<p>TIER 2 Environmental Assets and Actions</p> <p>Tier 2(a) Farmers, who do not have Priority Environmental Assets but whose lands include a Vulnerable Water Area, may apply for access to the scheme under Tier 2. In such cases, the appropriate actions relevant to Vulnerable Water Areas must be selected.</p> <p>Tier 2(b) In the absence of a Vulnerable Water Area, an applicant may still qualify for Tier 2 access provided one of the following actions are chosen and planned for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Tillage (arable farm \leq 30 ha) • Catch crops Establishment from a Sown Crop (arable farm \leq 30 ha) • Low Emission Slurry Spreading (livestock farm \leq 140kg N/ha) • Wild Bird Cover (grassland farm \leq 140 kg N/ha) <p>It is not guaranteed that all eligible applicants in Tier 2 will get into the Scheme and a scoring matrix will apply if necessary.</p>
GENERAL	<p>TIER 3 General Actions*</p> <p>These actions aim to enhance the climate change, water quality and biodiversity benefits delivered and can be chosen in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 actions or on their own (choosing only General Actions will not guarantee entry to the Scheme):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Input Permanent Pasture • Traditional Hay Meadow • Riparian Margins • Coppicing Hedgerows • Laying Hedgerows • Low emission slurry spreading • Planting New Hedgerows • Traditional Stone Wall Maintenance • Planting a Grove of Native Trees • Catch Crops • Minimum Tillage • Environmental Management of Fallow Land • Arable Margins • Bird boxes • Bat boxes • Conservation of solitary bees • Wild Bird cover • Traditional Orchards • Protection of water courses (not in High Status or Vulnerable Areas) • Protection of archaeological sites <p>*A scoring matrix will be used to allow farmers join GLAS by means of these actions if take-up of Tier 1 and Tier 2 actions permits.</p>

Glas Tier table part 2

8.2.5.3.2.2. Type of support

Support under GLAS will be by way of fixed-value packages for a minimum contract period of five years. A maximum payment of €5,000 per annum will apply in most cases, based on the value of the actions to be adopted, either on a compulsory basis or by selection from a menu of options, or by a combination of both.

Within budget limits, a higher-value package known as GLAS+ will be offered to a limited number of farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit. This package includes additional payment of up to €2,000 per annum, or a total package value of €7,000 in all. GLAS+ will apply in cases where the combined cost of delivering mandatory actions for a number of PEAs exceeds the standard package value of €5,000 per annum. However, farmers managing extensive areas of endangered- bird habitat will qualify automatically for GLAS+, without the need for a second PEA, and if they manage sufficient area.

The possibility for the conversion or adjustment of commitments, including the extension of the duration of the commitment as provided for under Article 14 of Commission Regulation 807/2014 is foreseen.

8.2.5.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

All actions under Article 28 must go beyond the GAEC, SMR and Greening baseline for the Basic Payment Scheme. Broader links include The EU Climate Change and Renewable Energy Package; the Kyoto Protocol; The Water Framework Directive; the Groundwater Directive ; the Nitrates Directive; The Habitats Directive; the Birds Directive; and the European target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020. GLAS includes payments for voluntary commitments undertaken on Natura sites (Farmland Habitat Conservation, Conservation of Farmland Birds and Commonages).

8.2.5.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries will be active farmers and the scheme will be open countrywide to all categories of farmer.

8.2.5.3.2.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs include cost of compliance, income foregone and transaction costs where applicable. The specific costings in relation to each action will respect the maximum per hectare amounts set out in Annex II to the Rural Development Regulation. The detailed costings, which have been independently verified, are set out in the following tables. These include a number of 'integrated' actions which incorporate non-productive capital investments as set out in M4.4. These include bee, bird and bat boxes, planting new hedgerows, traditional orchards, planting a grove of native trees, laying or coppicing hedgerows, Twite B, Grey Partridge, riparian margins and conservation of the solitary bee.

[GLAS Costings Table](#)

Action	€ per metre/year	€ per ha/year	€ per unit/year	€ per m ³ /year
Arable grass margins				
a. 3 metre margin	€0.35			
b. 4 metre margin	€0.50			
c. 6 metre margin	€0.70			
Bat boxes			€13	
Bird boxes			€6	
Commonages		€120		
Conservation of solitary bees				
a. Box			€6	
b. Sand			€45	
Coppicing hedgerows	€2.20			
Environmental management of fallow land		€750		
Farmland birds				
a. Breeding Waders		€366		
b. Chough farm scheme		€365		
c. Corncrake		€364		
d. Geese and Swans		€205		
e. Grey Partridge	€2.10			
f. Hen Harrier		€370		
g. Twite A – Semi-natural/semi-improved grassland field management option		€375		
h. Twite B – Improved grassland field management option	€1.50			
i. Twite C - Winter Feed Option		€900		
Farmland habitat (private Natura sites)		€79		
Catch Crops		€155		
Laying hedgerows	€3.70			
Low-emission slurry spreading (per m ³ per year)				€1.20
Low-input permanent pasture		€314		
Minimum tillage		€40		
Planting new hedgerows	€5.00			
Protection of archaeological sites				
a. Tillage option			€146	
b. Grassland option			€120	
Protection of water courses	€1.50			
Rare breeds (per LU)			€200	
Riparian margins				
a. 3 metre margin	€0.90			
b. 6 metre margin	€1.20			
c. 10 metre margin	€1.60			
d. 30 metre margin	€3.60			
Planting a Grove of Native Trees			€0.90	
Traditional hay meadow		€315		
Traditional orchards			€23.50	
Traditional stone wall maintenance	€0.70			
Wild bird cover		€900		

Glas Costings Table

8.2.5.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

Any active farmer, whose holding lies within the state, will be eligible to apply to join the scheme.

8.2.5.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

As described above, a tiered approach is being applied to entry into the Scheme. The tiers are based on a consideration of priority of the various environmental assets and actions and have been set out above.

Where required, selection of beneficiaries will be based on a scoring matrix, based on achieving best environmental return. The principles to be followed will include:

- Inherent environmental value of the actions chosen
- Relative environmental value of the actions to any notified themes
- Complementarity of the actions with each other
- Targeting existing environmental needs/potential of the farm
- Achieving regional balance, taking account of existing intake
- Achieving balance in holding size, taking account of existing intake
- Achieving balance in operational direction of participating holdings
- Previous engagement in delivery of AECMs (limited to situations where it clearly adds value in achieving environment-climate objectives).

The relative scoring may change from tranche to tranche, to ensure the best mix of projects overall. The process will be transparent, notified in advance of any tranche, identifying the required ‘pass-mark’ and ranking all eligible projects thereafter. Selection criteria will always be applied to candidates seeking to join GLAS via Tier 3, and may also be applied to candidates in Tier 1(b), and Tier 2.

8.2.5.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support under GLAS will be by way of fixed-value packages for a minimum contract period of five years. A maximum payment of €5,000 per annum will apply in most cases, based on the value of the actions to be adopted, either on a compulsory basis or by selection from a menu of options, or by a combination of both.

Within budget limits, a higher-value package known as GLAS+ will be offered to a limited number of farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit. This package includes additional payment of up to €2,000 per annum, or a total package value of €7,000 in all. GLAS+ will apply in cases where the combined cost of delivering mandatory actions for a number of PEAs exceeds the standard package value of €5,000 per annum. However, farmers managing extensive areas of endangered- bird habitat will qualify automatically for GLAS+, without the need for a second PEA, and if they manage sufficient area.

8.2.5.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.5.3.2.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures include

- Error Rates higher than anticipated
- Double funding of actions under GLAS and other measures e.g. Greening, Equivalence, and Organic Farming scheme.
- Management of Low Input actions
- Imbalance in achieving of main objectives
- Management and control, given the range of actions in GLAS.

8.2.5.3.2.9.2. Mitigating actions

In relation to the first risk identified, DAFM will undertake a series of thematic and geographic analyses to determine any patterns in the higher levels of error rates identified in previous schemes. One of the issues to emerge in the course of the previous Rural Development Programme has been the high level of error-rates encountered, particularly observed in the administration of the agri-environmental schemes. A number of factors were at the root of this, including farmer unfamiliarity with the application process and its implications, a lack of clarity about what was required for some measures, and a certain proportion of simple non-compliance.

A key consideration in the design of the GLAS scheme has been to address these issues. One of the main means of doing this is involving qualified agricultural advisors. Under GLAS, all applications must be submitted by a qualified agricultural advisor, and these advisors will be trained in advance on what is required. This will ensure much greater consistency across all applications, while the advisor will be able to explain to the farmer what exactly is required and work with them to develop a farm plan that responds effectively to the relevant environmental priorities, and with which the farmer is comfortable and capable of delivering. Further training/advice will be organised for all farmers admitted to the scheme to compliment the efforts of individual advisors in increasing awareness of scheme requirements at farm level.

A full online application system will be in place, and will be mandatory for those seeking to join GLAS. This system will give the farmer, through his advisor, full access to all datasets relating to his land, including identification of all environmental priorities, as well as species under threat and vulnerable or high quality watercourses that require protection. The system will also have mandatory fields that must be completed to address the key environmental priorities identified at individual farm level. The application will be predominantly map-based, with the advisor identifying online the areas under action, or the location and extent of linear actions, and accessing the specific environmental prescriptions applying. This will ensure complete transparency as to what actions are being undertaken under GLAS, and where these actions are planned.

New controls are being implemented in relation to the subdivision of parcels which removes a major area of potential error.

In addition, some measures are being revised to reduce the potential for error. An example of this is the tree-planting measure, which under GLAS has become the establishment of small grove of native trees. By requiring that trees be planted as a grove some of the difficulties encountered with individual plantings under previous schemes are avoided, while the environmental value is actually enhanced.

With regard to the second bullet point above, the possibility of double-funding exists and therefore a computerised cross-check will be developed across GLAS and other schemes to protect against double payment for the same commitment. This will include identification of parcels used for equivalence or as EFAs, while a matrix of compatible GLAS and Organic actions will also be compiled. (Similar controls will be applied to remaining participants in existing agri-environment schemes, where a risk of double funding may exist following introduction of the new greening requirements).

Actions involving reduced fertiliser inputs will be supported by way of ongoing advisory supports, as well as compulsory mid-cycle review of the Nutrient Management Plan, and reactive review should the farming system or intensity change at any time. On-the-spot inspections will include examination of farm records and sward condition, checking for the required species diversity and visual evidence of non-compliance with Nitrogen inputs.

As regards the fourth risk identified above, this will be counteracted by careful application of priorities and selection criteria to ensure that progress is made on achieving our objectives across the three main priorities of biodiversity, water quality and climate change mitigation.

In relation to the management and control of the range of actions, mitigating actions such as training and advisor input are built into the measure design. In addition, a regime of on the spot inspection and administrative checks will mitigate the risk here and build on the experience of previous programme periods.

8.2.5.3.2.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. In particular, experience from previous programming rounds has been taken into account in the form of a number of key design features which will ensure that error rates are minimised and that an appropriate control regime is in place.

8.2.5.3.2.10. Information specific to the operation

Identification and definition of the relevant baseline elements; this shall include the relevant mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1) (c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and other relevant mandatory requirements established by national law

See annexes, including new thematic table and listing of national legislation.

Other Core requirements continued from point 1 - *Description of the type of operation.*

For **Commonages** the key components of the GLAS approach are as follows:

- Submission of a single plan, by a single qualified agricultural adviser, acting for all participating shareholders;

- Achieving the maximum participation possible from all active shareholders;
- Developing a plan which combines both individual and group-based actions;
- Implementing a grazing regime to which everyone contributes, with an individual and group stocking requirements;
- Flexibility and time to meet the targets set, including some sharing of the burden of grazing at Group level;
- Application to both UAA and non-UAA lands (subject to certain exclusions, e.g. roads, lakes, areas of afforestation);
- Commitment to additional environmental action, over and above the grazing-regime;
- Open to new members joining plan in subsequent years to achieve optimum participation.

The prime environmental prescription for commonages is a balanced grazing regime: in the past we have seen the very serious effects of overgrazing on some commonages, while more recently we have seen what is a different, but equally insidious, effect of under-grazing on many more commonages.

When a group of shareholders applies to join GLAS, a specific Commonage Plan must be drawn up on their behalf by a qualified agricultural advisor, approved and trained by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The cost of this plan is factored into the per hectare rate proposed for Commonages. The advisor will first assess the commonage, comparing its current state with previous assessments and taking full account of the landscape character, including habitats and peatlands. On the basis of this inspection, the advisor must decide whether the existing recommended stocking levels should still apply, or if not what adjustments need to be made and on what basis. This establishes an overall minimum and maximum stocking level for the commonage as a whole, which in turn is converted into individual stocking requirements for each shareholder, based on the share they hold in the commonage.

The GLAS Commonage Plan will run for five years with the intention of establishing a balanced grazing regime over that period, supported by whatever additional actions the group sees as important for the good management of the commonage. These could include prescribed burning, removal of rubbish, or even predator control (which is important where parallel bird restoration projects are in place on the commonage).

One of the objectives of this scheme is to encourage as many shareholders as possible on any commonage to work together in the best interests of the environmental health of their shared land. While a high initial uptake is envisaged once the scheme is up-and-running, it is expected that some shareholders may not join immediately. For this reason it is intended to let new members join the Group in later years, up to Year 3 (when the final grazing requirement is to be reached), but not after that point. This will enable the grazing burden to be more evenly distributed, if desired, as well as bringing as much grazing effort as possible on the commonage into an environmentally-driven management regime. All members of the Group will undertake five years' of commitment, irrespective of when they join the Commonage Plan.

Peatlands

The conservation of blanket bogs is addressed primarily through the Commonage measure and through privately-owned Natura areas, both of which are classified as PEAs guaranteeing priority access to the

measure. The Specification detailing the required actions will make this clear. In addition, the conservation/restoration of upland peats will be a specific theme for inclusion in the call-for-proposals under the planned new Locally-Led measure.

See Annex - Thematic Table of GLAS Commitments

The minimum requirements for fertilisers must include, inter alia, the Codes of Good Practice introduced under Directive 91/676/EEC for farms outside Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, and requirements concerning phosphorous pollution; the minimum requirements for plant protection products use must include, inter alia, general principles for integrated pest management introduced by Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, requirements to have a licence to use the products and meet training obligations, requirements on safe storage, the checking of application machinery and rules on pesticide use close to water and other sensitive sites, as established by national legislation

Fertilisers

The minimum requirements for fertilisers are set out in the Good Agricultural Practice for the protection of waters regulations 2014 (SI 31 of 2014). These regulations will be enforced through SMR 1 and GAEC 1. Ireland has adopted a whole territory approach to implement these regulations; therefore the regulations apply to all farms. The main elements of these Regulations include:

- Adherence to a limit on livestock + organic manure permissible. i.e. not greater than 170 kg of nitrogen per hectare in a year (unless qualifies as derogation farmer)
- Farmers must adhere to prohibited spreading periods for chemical and organic fertilisers. The prohibited periods vary depending on the type of fertiliser and relevant 'zones' in Ireland.
- Further precautions when applying fertilisers include using appropriate machinery, timing to suit appropriate weather conditions and adhering to buffer zones for spreading chemical and organic fertilisers for different kinds of water bodies (lakes, rivers, wells etc)
- Farmers must adhere to overall maximum fertilisation rates for nitrogen and phosphorus (i.e., organic and chemical fertiliser combined). In general, applications must match crop needs/off-takes.
- Livestock farmers must have sufficient storage capacity to meet the minimum requirements of the Regulations (which vary according to zone), and all storage facilities must be kept leak-proof and structurally sound.
- The rules about ploughing and the use of non-selective herbicides must be followed in order to maintain a minimum soil cover during certain defined risk periods.
- A minimum level of record keeping is required; including records of the fertilisers brought onto the holding or exported. Records must also include area farmed, cropping regime, types and numbers of livestock, and storage facilities on farm.

Baseline requirements of all farmers using plant protection and biocidal products (SMR 10)

- Only authorised or registered plant protection and biocidal products may be stored and used.
- Plant protection and biocidal products must be stored, handled and used properly as specified on current approved product labels.
- Plant protection products must, when appropriate, be used in accordance with the principles of integrated control.
- Plant protection products must be used in accordance with the principles of good plant protection practice.

- Records of acquisition, use and disposal of plant protection and biocidal products must be maintained and be produced for inspection.
- Plant protection and biocidal products that are no longer approved for use must not be retained.
- Under Irish legislation all professional users of plant production products (PPP) are legally obliged to apply the general principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as set out in Annex III to Directive 2009/128/EC. IPM involves careful consideration of all available plant protection methods, to ensure that PPP use is reduced to levels that are economically and ecologically justified, thereby minimising risks to human health and the environment. Furthermore, it is a legal requirement to maintain sufficient records to demonstrate the application of these principles. A template of the record keeping requirements that should be maintained at farm level can be found at [http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/media/pesticides/content/sud/IPM%20and%20Pesticide%20Application%20Record%20Sheets%20\(pdf\).pdf](http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/media/pesticides/content/sud/IPM%20and%20Pesticide%20Application%20Record%20Sheets%20(pdf).pdf). Where chemical control is deemed the most appropriate crop protection measure, individual PPPs have particular authorisation conditions which include restrictions on application timing e.g. pesticides should not be applied when heavy rainfall is forecast, insecticides applied when pollinators not actively foraging, etc. These requirements are not compensated for under GLAS. The application of IPM crop specific guidelines is considered an entirely voluntary process.

List of local breeds in danger of being lost to farming and of plant genetic resources under threat of genetic erosion

Rare Breeds (*number of breeding females listed in italics in each case*)

Cattle (Irish Maol 200, Kerry 590 and Dexter 200), Horses and Ponies (Connemara Pony 3,493, Irish Draught 530 and Kerry Bog Pony 96) and Sheep (Galway 1,050).

The Irish Cattle Breeders Federation (ICBF) is approved by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine to co-ordinate native breed conservation programmes for cattle, sheep and horses in Ireland. Extensive research on the population genetics of native Irish rare breeds has been conducted by the ICBF. The Federation actively suggests ways to ensure genetic diversity within the breeds is maintained, which is critical to ensure that they remain a key part of Ireland's unique biological diversity. The ICBF fulfils the function of the recognised scientific body foreseen under Art.7(3) of Regulation 807/2014 and has certified the numbers of breeding females and the endangered status of the listed breeds.

The relevant technical bodies foreseen in the regulation are as follows:

- The Connemara Pony Breeder's Society
- Kerry Cattle Society of Ireland
- Dexter Cattle Society
- Irish Moiled Cattle Society
- Horse Sport Ireland (*Irish Draught*)
- Kerry Bog Pony Society
- Galway Sheep Breeders Society

The bodies concerned possess the necessary skills and knowledge to identify animals of the breeds in danger.

Description of the methodology and of the agronomic assumptions and parameters including the description of the baseline requirements as referred to in Article 29(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which are relevant for each particular type of commitment used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs, income foregone resulting from the commitment made and level of the transaction costs; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account aid granted under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, including payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment, in order to exclude double funding; where appropriate, the conversion method used for other units in accordance with Article 9 of this Regulation

GLAS is an action-based measure. Costings for the various actions have been finalised on the basis of cost of compliance and income foregone. Financial data and statistics from the Teagasc National Farm Survey and Management Data for Farm Planning were used in these calculations. Where appropriate, a transaction cost is also allowed. The costings have been independently verified by Teagasc, a body which is administratively independent of DAFM. Standard costs will be used when calculating amounts payable in respect of capital investments. See also new thematic table.

8.2.5.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.5.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.5.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.5.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.5.5. *Information specific to the measure*

Identification and definition of the relevant baseline elements; this shall include the relevant mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1) (c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and other relevant mandatory requirements established by national law

Referenced elsewhere.

The minimum requirements for fertilisers must include, inter alia, the Codes of Good Practice introduced under Directive 91/676/EEC for farms outside Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, and requirements concerning phosphorous pollution; the minimum requirements for plant protection products use must include, inter alia, general principles for integrated pest management introduced by Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, requirements to have a licence to use the products and meet training obligations, requirements on safe storage, the checking of application machinery and rules on pesticide use close to water and other sensitive sites, as established by national legislation

Referenced elsewhere.

List of local breeds in danger of being lost to farming and of plant genetic resources under threat of genetic erosion

Referenced elsewhere.

Description of the methodology and of the agronomic assumptions and parameters including the description of the baseline requirements as referred to in Article 29(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which are relevant for each particular type of commitment used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs, income foregone resulting from the commitment made and level of the transaction costs; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account aid granted under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, including payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment, in order to exclude double funding; where appropriate, the conversion method used for other units in accordance with Article 9 of this Regulation

Referenced elsewhere.

8.2.5.6. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

Additional information specific to the Measure concerned

Please see new thematic table for overview of all actions, including relationship to baseline, basis for payment and any Annex II Ceiling implications.

8.2.6. M11 - Organic farming (art 29)

8.2.6.1. Legal basis

Article 29 of Regulation 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 – Organic Farming

8.2.6.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

This measure is expected to contribute towards the following Focus Areas :

- 4A – Biodiversity, HNV farming and landscapes,
- 4B – Water, fertiliser and pesticide management,
- 4C – Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

In the rural development context, organic farming is mainly expected to establish and maintain a sustainable management system for agriculture. The farming practices it promotes contribute to improving soil and water quality, to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and to the improvement of the state of biodiversity e.g. by crop rotation, use of organic fertilisers, improvement to soil organic matter and by no use of synthetic plant protection products or synthetic fertilisers.

The support under this measure aims to encourage farmers to convert from conventional farming methods and to apply organic farming methods as defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as well as maintain these methods after the initial period of conversion (which will be a maximum period of two years), thus answering societal demand for the use of environmentally friendly farming practices. Organic production thus responds to consumer demand for organic production and also contributes to environmental, animal welfare and rural development issues.

The overall objective of the Organic Farming Scheme is to deliver enhanced environmental and animal welfare benefits and to encourage producers to respond to the market demand for organically produced food.

One of the issues identified in the SWOT analysis is the low levels of organic production in Ireland. In 2010, across the EU27 Member States 5.7% of the total Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA) was devoted to organic crop area. In Ireland, the corresponding figure was 1.1%. While the organic sector in Ireland is relatively small in relation to agriculture as a whole, the sector does represent an opportunity for growth and Food Harvest 2020 endorsed the target of 5% of UAA and recommended that the Department should continue to directly support the sector through the Organic Farming Scheme and the Schemes of Grant Aid for the Development of the Organic Sector.

A theme emerging from stakeholder consultation is that the additional support for farmers via the Organic Farming Scheme is the key factor underlying conversion and promoting continuance within the sector,

thereby responding to the market demand for organically produced food.

Under the 2007 – 2013 RDP, the Organic Farming scheme did not encourage enough farmers to convert to organic agriculture. There was in fact a decline in the numbers joining the Organic Farming Scheme since 2010. This highlights the necessity for a more incentivised and targeted scheme in the 2014 – 2020 RDP in order to help meet the demand that exists for organically produced food.

The general structure and implementation/administration of the existing Organic Farming Scheme will be continued, which entails an annual area-based payment over a maximum contract period of 5 years and 11 months, but with increased payment per hectare and a reduced differential between the conversion and maintenance rates, along with some targeted incentives aimed at areas that are in deficit.

8.2.6.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.6.3.1. Organic Farming Scheme

Sub-measure:

- 11.1 - payment to convert to organic farming practices and methods
- 11.2 - payment to maintain organic farming practices and methods

8.2.6.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

As outlined above, the scheme will retain the general structure and implementation/administration of the existing Organic Farming Scheme which entails an annual area-based payment over a maximum 5 years and 11 months contract period. Annual extensions of contracts are not foreseen.

The logic underlying the measure is to encourage and maintain the uptake of organic farming in order to progress towards European targets, with consequent benefits to the environment, as well as responding to the market demand for organically produced food. Based on the experience of running the measure to date and feedback received from stakeholders, the introduction of a more targeted incentivised payment structure aims to more effectively address this issue. This payment structure takes account of the need to incentivise new entrants as well as to support ongoing organic producers.

As Article 29 of the new RDP places increased emphasis on maintenance of organic farming practices, there is increased focus within the new Organic Farming Scheme on ensuring continuity of commitment to organic production. This new focus is reflected also in the payment structure.

The measure design process has also taken into account the need to target supports to areas that are in deficit. Specifically, cultivation of red clover is now incentivised both for its value as a source of high-protein, high dry-matter organic fodder, as well as for its environmental benefits as a natural nitrogen-fixer.

All first time Organic Farming Scheme applicants must have completed an approved training course. The Approved Training Course shall include the National Framework of Qualifications Level 5 Introduction to Organic Farming Course, or any equivalent course that will be determined by DAFM. This course does not form part of the Organic Farming Scheme, nor is it funded via the RDP.

8.2.6.3.1.2. Type of support

The principal support will be an annual area-based payment per hectare of UAA over a maximum 5 years and 11 months contract period. The minimum contract length is 5 years. This rate is comprised of a higher payment for farmers converting land to organic farming for the first time payable for the initial maximum two year conversion period, with a maintenance payment thereafter.. Higher rates are payable for horticultural operations (including fruit) and for tillage operations, both of which are strongly in deficit. A top-up payment of €30/ha is provided to incentivise the growing of red clover.

8.2.6.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

- GAEC and cross compliance requirements: Organic farmers are subject, where applicable, to the full suite of GAEC and Cross Compliance Requirements (SMRs).
- Greening requirement: Organic farmers may meet the Greening requirement by virtue of a high proportion of permanent grassland or by any other of the various options available, including their organic status.
- Relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and relevant mandatory requirements established by national law.

8.2.6.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries under the scheme will be active organic farmers, registered with DAFM and licensed by one of the Organic Control Bodies.

8.2.6.3.1.5. Eligible costs

The support is based on the additional costs incurred, income foregone resulting from farming to the organic standards and a transaction cost when compared to a conventional farmer of similar land area, intensity of production and efficiency. The organic licence cost is incorporated within eligible costs, under costs incurred.

8.2.6.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

As in the previous Organic Farming Scheme a series of core requirements defines basic eligibility. Key conditions include:

- Requirement of minimum farm area of 3 hectares, except for horticultural (including fruit) producers where the minimum farm area is 1 hectare.
- Registration with one of the Organic Control Bodies, possession of a valid organic licence and registration with DAFM.

8.2.6.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

With regard to selection, the key selection tools are designed to incentivise whole farm conversions, a mixed farming approach and sectoral balance. Applicants will be selected according to criteria which will include:

- Prioritisation of total conversion over partial conversion
- Prioritisation of mixed farms
- Achieving sectoral balance across grassland, horticulture (including fruit) and tillage

The selection criteria, including the marking scheme, will be detailed in the Terms and Conditions for this measure. There will be a minimum points requirement for selection and the process will be fully transparent.

8.2.6.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

The premium will be area based as a payment per hectare of UAA. Organic Farming scheme payment rates are calculated on the basis of conversion for a maximum period of two years with a maintenance payment thereafter. The drop in production levels and consequent loss of income is not confined solely to the initial conversion period and therefore justifies a higher level of payment from year two onwards than the rate applied under the 2007-2013 RDP

The standard rate of payment is €220/ha for conversion with a maintenance rate of €170/ha, with higher rates of €300 and €200 applying for horticulture (including fruit) operations, and €260 and €170 for tillage operations. In addition, a top-up of €30/ha for red-clover is included. The higher horticultural (including fruit) rates will apply to the first six hectares only; thereafter the standard rate applies. For tillage farmers, the higher rate ceiling is 20 ha.

Financial data and statistics from the Teagasc National Farm Survey and Management Data for Farm Planning were used in the calculation of premia. DAFM calculated the premia on the basis of established Agronomic Assumptions and methodology which are set out in further detail below.

8.2.6.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.6.3.1.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

- Organic farming commitments are subject to the principle of no double funding. According to Art. 29(4) of the regulation on direct payments, organic farmers are entitled to the greening payments ipso facto.
- There is a risk also of double funding where organic farmers also participate in other agri environment actions (GLAS etc)
- The licensing of organic operators is devolved to Certifying Bodies (currently 5) approved by the Minister. There is a risk that the control bodies' inspections are not effective, thus permitting non-compliant operators access to the Organic Farming Scheme.
- An additional premium is payable to encourage the cultivation of red clover as a source of high-protein organic fodder, and for its nitrogen-fixing characteristics; the risk here is that a claim may be submitted for area in excess of what is actually under cultivation, or that the crop is not cultivated at all.

8.2.6.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

- In order to respect the principle of non-double funding, the calculation of the organic payment will address the Greening issue and the certification of the correctness of the premia calculations will include a specific reference confirming that the proposed premia avoids double funding, following EU guidelines and methodologies.
- Organic Farming Scheme and GLAS programmes will be constructed and presented to deliver complementarity, but the specific undertakings will not overlap, thus avoiding double-funding.
- The Organic Certifying Bodies must be independently accredited to ISO standards. The Department as the Competent Authority is also obliged to have in place a control system that confirms the effectiveness of the licensing system.
- In relation to red clover, details of areas under cultivation will be captured as part of the annual BPS application and use to ground the claim for the OFS premium; in addition to the usual Pillar 1 checks and procedures, the Organic inspectorate will also be carrying out farm-inspections of at least 5% of claimants, including a proportion of claimants for red clover.

8.2.6.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. In particular, issue in relation to possible double funding have been addressed in line with the relevant Commission guidance and appropriate systems for control are in place.

8.2.6.3.1.10. Information specific to the operation

Identification and definition of the relevant baseline elements; this shall include the relevant mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article

4(1) (c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and other relevant mandatory requirements established by national law

Baseline elements:

- GAEC and cross compliance requirements Organic farmers are subject, where applicable, to the full suite of GAEC and Cross Compliance Requirements (SMRs).
- Greening requirement. Organic farmers may meet the Greening requirement by virtue of a high proportion of permanent grassland or by any other of the various options available, including their organic status. Relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and relevant mandatory requirements established by national law. These requirements will be same as GLAS. See Annexes 2 and 3 of the GLAS section for further information.

The commitments under the Organic Farming measure are such that they go beyond the requirements of the baseline.

Description of the methodology and of the agronomic assumptions and parameters including the description of the baseline requirements as referred to in Article 29(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which are relevant for each particular type of commitment used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs, income foregone resulting from the commitment made and level of the transaction costs; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account aid granted under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, including payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment, in order to exclude double funding; where appropriate, the conversion method used for other units in accordance with Article 9 of this Regulation

Double funding will be avoided.

Calculation of the additional costs associated with conversion to organic farming and continuation within the organic system of production in compliance with the rules of organic production as laid down in:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control;
- Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland.

The premium is based on the additional costs incurred and income foregone resulting from farming to the organic standards when compared to a conventional farmer of similar land area, intensity of production and efficiency. (Transaction costs have not been included in DAFM methodology.)

Organic farmers incur substantial additional costs when complying with the rules of organic production. The associated costs of production are greater.

The costs are based on a gross margin comparison of typical Irish farm holdings and enterprises: comparing the income differential between conventional production and organic production. As stipulated in Article

29.4 of Regulation 1305/2013, DAFM has computed a payment per hectare with the cost associated with conversion to or maintaining organic farming based on the additional costs and income forgone resulting from the commitment made. DAFM computed the income forgone by identifying and applying relevant monetary values (based, inter alia, on independent published agronomic financial data via National Farm Surveys and Farm Management data). DAFM allocated an area based cost for conversion to organic farming and maintenance thereafter for the duration of the contract. The conversion rate is calculated primarily on compensating the farmer for the fact that the products produced during conversion do not command the organic premium. Thus the conversion rate is the maintenance rate which DAFM calculated plus the premium (based on the price of the organic crop or product in comparison to the conventional version.). The different rates are justified on the basis of a detailed analysis of the different organic sectors (cattle farmers, arable farmers, and horticultural produces) and the agri-economic independent data on which we based the individual premia determination.

The specific detailed Agronomic Assumptions on which the costings methodology is based are set out below:

- The output on Irish organic farms is between 20% and 30% lower than on conventional farms.
- The premium for organic product is between 15% and 30% depending on the specific product being produced (For organic white meat such as chicken and pork, this premium is 30%; however for salad crops this premium is around 20%).
- However, this premium is not always realised. Due to the wide dispersal of organic operators, the organic product is often sold into conventional markets without a premium.
- Transport costs are higher due to the dispersed nature of organic farms and the long distances to market.
- For premium calculation the conversion period has been fixed as being 2 years.
- There is no premium for the market for in-conversion products during the conversion period. The conversion premium is calculated based on this fact i.e. on average, the established maintenance rate plus the premium.
- Labour input on organic farms is higher than conventional neighbours.
- Organic inputs, such as animals, seed and plant propagation material are more expensive. In particular protein animal feeds (which must be imported) are almost double the conventional feed prices e.g. €480/tonne for ruminant feed and €700/tonne for pig and poultry rations.

The premia compensate partially for the additional costs and income forgone. However, the premia are part of a full suite of incentives that have been put in place for organic farmers including developing a specific organic training course, providing specialised extension services providing technical and financial advice and access to organic capital investment grants under Measure 4. The cumulative effect and the synergy between the various incentives and services is designed to achieve the stated objective of supporting the organic sector in Ireland.

8.2.6.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.6.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.6.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.6.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.6.5. *Information specific to the measure*

Identification and definition of the relevant baseline elements; this shall include the relevant mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1) (c)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the relevant minimum requirements for fertilisers and plant protection products use, and other relevant mandatory requirements established by national law

As referenced above.

Description of the methodology and of the agronomic assumptions and parameters including the description of the baseline requirements as referred to in Article 29(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, which are relevant for each particular type of commitment used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs, income foregone resulting from the commitment made and level of the transaction costs; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account aid granted under Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, including payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment, in order to exclude double funding; where appropriate, the conversion method used for other units in accordance with Article 9 of this Regulation

As referenced above

8.2.6.6. *Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure*

n/a

8.2.7. M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)

8.2.7.1. Legal basis

Article 30 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments)

8.2.7.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, as Natura areas will be targeted through Measure 10.

This measure is programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

8.2.7.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.7.3.1. Provision for ongoing Natura commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

Sub-measure:

- 12.1 - compensation payment for Natura 2000 agricultural areas

8.2.7.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, as Natura areas will be targeted through Measure 10.

This measure is programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

8.2.7.3.1.2. Type of support

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, as Natura areas will be targeted through Measure 10.

This measure is programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

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8.2.7.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.5. Eligible costs

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.7.3.1.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

n/a

8.2.7.3.1.10. Information specific to the operation

Identification and definition of the baseline elements; for Natura 2000 payments this should include the good agricultural and environmental condition provided for in Article 94 and Annex II to regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and the relevant criteria and minimum activities referred to in Article 4(1)(c) (ii) and (c) (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013; for WFD payments this shall include mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1)(c) (ii) and (c) (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013

n/a

Identification of the restrictions/disadvantages based on which payments can be granted and indication of compulsory practices

n/a

For WFD payments: definition of major changes in type of land use and description of the links with the programmes of measures of the river basin management plan referred to in Article 13 of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ("WFD");

n/a

For Natura 2000: the areas designated to implement Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and the obligations for farmers resulting from the corresponding national and/or regional management provisions

n/a

The description of the methodology and the agronomic assumptions including the description of the baseline requirements referred to in Article 30(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 for Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC and in Article 30(4) of that Regulation for the WFD used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs and income foregone resulting from the disadvantages in the areas concerned related to the implementation of Directives 92/43/EEC, 2009/147/EC and the WFD; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment granted in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, in order to exclude double funding

n/a

In case other delimited nature protection areas with environmental restrictions are chosen to be supported within this measure, specification of the sites and contribution to the implementation of Article 10 of Directive 92/43/EEC

n/a

Indication of the link between the implementation of the measure and the Prioritized Action Framework (Art 8(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC)

n/a

8.2.7.4. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.7.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

n/a

8.2.7.4.2. Mitigating actions

n/a

8.2.7.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

n/a

8.2.7.5. Information specific to the measure

Identification and definition of the baseline elements; for Natura 2000 payments this should include the good agricultural and environmental condition provided for in Article 94 and Annex II to regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and the relevant criteria and minimum activities referred to in Article 4(1)(c) (ii) and (c) (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013; for WFD payments this shall include mandatory standards established pursuant to Chapter I of Title VI of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 and the relevant criteria and minimum activities established pursuant to Article 4(1)(c) (ii) and (c) (iii) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013

n/a

Identification of the restrictions/disadvantages based on which payments can be granted and indication of compulsory practices

n/a

For WFD payments: definition of major changes in type of land use and description of the links with the programmes of measures of the river basin management plan referred to in Article 13 of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ("WFD");

n/a

For Natura 2000: the areas designated to implement Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and the obligations for farmers resulting from the corresponding national and/or regional management provisions

n/a

The description of the methodology and the agronomic assumptions including the description of the baseline requirements referred to in Article 30(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 for Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC and in Article 30(4) of that Regulation for the WFD used as reference for the calculations justifying additional costs and income foregone resulting from the disadvantages in the areas concerned related to the implementation of Directives 92/43/EEC, 2009/147/EC and the WFD; where relevant, that methodology shall take into account payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment granted in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, in order to exclude double funding

n/a

In case other delimited nature protection areas with environmental restrictions are chosen to be supported within this measure, specification of the sites and contribution to the implementation of Article 10 of Directive 92/43/EEC

n/a

Indication of the link between the implementation of the measure and the Prioritized Action Framework (Art 8(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC)

n/a

8.2.7.6. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

n/a

8.2.8. M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)

8.2.8.1. *Legal basis*

Articles 31 and 32 of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013

8.2.8.2. *General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives*

This measure will contribute to Focus Area 4A – Biodiversity, HNV farming and landscapes.

The measure consists of the following two sub-measures:

- Sub-measure 13.2 - compensation payment for other areas facing significant natural constraints
- Sub-measure 13.3 – compensation payment to other areas affected by specific constraints (referring to island farming)

Compensation payment for other areas facing significant natural constraints

This sub-measure will continue to be based on the previous existing Less Favoured Areas Scheme pending the delineation of Areas of Natural Constraint in accordance with Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 1305/2013. The delineation exercise has commenced with the finalisation of the national soil analysis survey (ISIS) by the relevant State Agency – Teagasc. In view of the impending introduction of the new scheme and taking into account the need for legal certainty, it has been decided to retain as much of the existing provisions as is possible.

Those farming in designated disadvantaged areas face significant hardships deriving from factors such as remoteness, difficult topography, climatic problems and poor soil conditions. They tend to have lower farm productivity and higher unit production costs than farmers in other areas. Without financial support, these lower returns from farming would pose a major threat to the future viability of these farming communities and the continued farming action in line with environmental standards, particularly on marginal lands.

Payments to farmers in mountain areas or in other areas facing natural or other specific constraints will, by encouraging continued use of agricultural land, contribute to maintaining the countryside as well as to maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems. In order to ensure the efficiency of such support, payments will compensate farmers for income foregone and additional costs linked to the disadvantage of the area concerned.

Compensation payment to other areas affected by specific constraints (referring to island farming)

Building on the logic underlying submeasure 13.2 above, support will be made available under this submeasure in recognition of the specific constraints pertaining to island farmers. The preparatory analysis for the RDP highlighted that island farmers face specific constraints in relation to issues such as higher production costs.

Support under these two submeasures will be delivered nationally via a single Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme.

Ireland is not implementing ANC support under Pillar 1.

8.2.8.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.8.3.1. Areas of Natural Constraints (ANCs)

Sub-measure:

- 13.2 - compensation payment for other areas facing significant natural constraints

8.2.8.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

Payments will only be in respect of agricultural land, with different rates of aid applicable, based on the following land designations:

- Mountain type land;
- More severely handicapped (lowland); and
- Less severely handicapped (lowland).

This is likely to change following the completion of the delineation of areas with significant constraint and completion of the fine-tuning exercise. The measure will:

- Ensure continued agricultural land use, thereby contributing to the maintenance of a viable rural society
- Maintain the countryside and
- Maintain and promote sustainable farming systems, which in particular take account of environmental protection requirements.

8.2.8.3.1.2. Type of support

Payment to be made annually.

8.2.8.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.8.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

In the order of 95,000 eligible farmers are expected to benefit under the measure.

8.2.8.3.1.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs are determined on the basis of the additional costs and income foregone linked to the area of disadvantage.

8.2.8.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

Beneficiaries must:

- Comply with the description of ‘active farmer’ in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013;
- Occupy and farm at own risk a minimum of three hectares of forage land, situated in a recognised ANC area. (DAFM can confirm that this requirement will not result in any trade distortion);
- Undertake to actively farm and manage the land situated in an ANC area and applied on in the given year of application;
- Comply with Cross Compliance requirements under Article 92 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013.
- Have a holding that meets the minimum stocking levels (grazing requirement).

Applicants who are partners in a partnership, registered under Irish National Regulations, can continue to benefit individually under the Scheme, based on the area of ANC land they contribute to the partnership. (Individual threshold limits will apply at measure level for partnership members).

Regarding the minimum stocking density requirement, it is 0.15 livestock units per hectare or a lower level where it is justified on environmental grounds. The minimum stocking level will be set systematically at individual farmer level using the 0.15 lu/ha normally and an established lower stocking figure for commonages and other marginal land. The calculation of the actual stocking density on a scheme-year basis will be carried out using the database on the identification and registration of animals, the sheep census data, flock registers and animal passports. The compliance with the minimum stocking density requirements will be checked administratively in the case of all applications and verified on the ground in the case of the 5% eligibility inspection cases.

Given the nature of farming in designated areas, it is not foreseen that this requirement will exclude any farmers from this measure on the basis of the category of land / sector (e.g. arable) they are farming.

8.2.8.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

No selection criteria apply to this measure.

8.2.8.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Payments are made annually per hectare. The payment rates, based on the different degree of constraints, are as follows:

- Mountain Type Land: €109.71 on first 10 forage hectares, or part thereof, and €95.99 per hectare on remaining hectares up to a maximum of 34 hectares.
- More Severely Handicapped Lowland: €95.99 per forage hectare up to a maximum of 30 hectares.
- Less Severely Handicapped Lowland and Coastal Areas with Specific Handicaps: €82.27 per forage hectare up to a maximum of 30 hectares.

8.2.8.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.8.3.1.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

Risks relate to ensuring farmers in receipt of support meet all the conditions in terms of farming in a designated area, compliance with environmental standards and stocking rates. However, this is a long standing area based measure with a rigorous system of administrative and field checks which are integrated with the Land Parcel Identification System and the Basic Payment Scheme systems.

8.2.8.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

In order to address these risks, a dual system of administrative checks and on farm inspections is in place.

All applicants under the ANC Scheme will be subjected to robust and comprehensive administrative checks. As the ANC Scheme is an area based Scheme, the claimed area will be subjected to a cross-check against the LPIS database. The LPIS database, which is updated on a continuous basis, will verify that the land claimed is situated in a designated area and also the accuracy of the area claimed will be confirmed. In relation to the stocking density requirement, the administrative checks include verification by way of the database on the identification and registration of animals, sheep census data, flock registers and animal passports. These administrative checks are enhanced by on-the-spot eligibility checks on more than 5% of all applicants, which include a physical verification of the herds or flocks. It also involves the systematic use of a commonage land database to calculate a lower stocking level where that is justified on environmental grounds.

8.2.8.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. A structured control process is in place which builds on the experience of implementing the LFA scheme in previous programming periods.

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8.2.8.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Payment rates are based on an examination of standard output data from the Central Statistics Office Census of Agriculture and data from DAFM databases. This facilitated a comparison at district electoral division (DED) level of DEDs containing designated land with DEDs containing no designated land. CSO Standard output figures show for mountain area only an average SO/ha of €83.64, for ‘more severe only’ an average SO/ha of €748.58, for ‘less severely only’ an average SO/ha of €965.87, and for non designated areas an average SO/ha of €1,063.78. In addition, Teagasc data shows that output per ha, gross margin and family farm income are all lower on farms that are in receipt of LFA/ANC payment. Teagasc have also undertaken viability analysis which showed that the viability rate was consistently higher in non-LFA than LFA (viability rate as measured by farms with incomes plus a return on investment greater than the minimum agricultural wage). The average yearly payment will be at least €25 per ha.

8.2.8.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of the threshold level of area per holding on the basis of which the Member State calculates degressivity of payments

Target Area: The scheme will continue to apply to all the Less Favoured Areas in Ireland, as first listed in Council Directive 75/272/EEC with subsequent reviews and amendments of the list contained in the Annexes to Directives 85/350/EEC, Directive 91/466/EEC and Directive /96/52 EEC as last amended by Commission Decision 709 of 23 March 1999. These areas were also eligible under Article 36(a)(ii) of Reg. (EC) No 1698/2005 during the 2007-2013 programming period. No new areas were added or excluded at the initial RDP design stage pending the new delineation of ANC .This designation will apply pending the delineation of Areas of Natural Constraint in accordance with Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 1305/2013.

The new delineation will be fully complete and implemented in 2018. At that stage a decision will be made as to whether a phasing out period is necessary with digressive payments made in accordance with Article 33 of Regulation 1305/2013.

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the local unit-level applied for the designation of the areas.

n/a

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the application of the method including the criteria referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 for the delimitation of the three categories of areas referred to in that Article including the description and results of the fine-tuning exercise for areas facing natural and other specific constraints other than mountain areas.

n/a

8.2.8.3.2. Specific support for offshore island farming

Sub-measure:

- 13.3 - compensation payment to other areas affected by specific constraints

8.2.8.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

Specific support will be made available under this submeasure in recognition of the constraints facing offshore island farming. The support will be integrated nationally with sub-measure 13.2 to form one Areas of Natural Constraints Scheme.

Island holdings are generally small and fragmented where the potential for intensification is limited and farming is economically marginal, at best. Farming on the off-shore islands off Ireland is in continuous decline. Holdings tend to provide for minimum yields from grazing in addition to very limited facilities to harvest fodder; this in turn leads to restricted stocking levels on many holdings. Island farming is labour-intensive with a huge dependence on external supports, which are situated on the mainland.

If this trend of decline is not arrested, it could have a significant negative impact on both the environment and the maintenance of the countryside. It is necessary for appropriate land management to continue in order to conserve, and improve the environment, to maintain the countryside (which has a link to tourism on the islands via landscape preservation etc), and to protect the coastline.

The maintenance of farming on Ireland's offshore islands, including the maintenance of traditional extensive farming methods, is vital in terms of the delivery of environmental benefits via the avoidance of land abandonment and the preservation of habitats. This has been recognised, for example, in the Heritage Council's report on High Nature Value Farming in Ireland which refers to the traditional agricultural landscape in the Aran Islands as presenting a "mosaic of habitats, characterised by the network of dry stone walls and rocky, wildflower-rich fields." This report also highlighted a decline in traditional farm practices and potential detrimental effects arising from scrub encroachment or abandonment.

The National Spatial Strategy for Ireland, 2002-2020 recognises that the offshore islands face particular challenges, and the need for special consideration to be given to islands was an issue which was highlighted in the associated consultation process. This report also points to the development of natural resources as a policy response to the issues facing remote areas such as the islands.

The Heritage Council also emphasised the important role that tourism can play in supporting island farmers. The maintenance of the natural landscapes and scenic beauty of Ireland's offshore islands is key to ensuring that island communities can benefit from Ireland's tourism industry. Comhar na nOileán Teoranta's submission in respect of the LEADER element of the 2007-2013 RDP also highlights the challenges facing farmers on the islands and identifies the need to develop rural tourism on islands in a manner which takes

account of the close links with agricultural activity. Comhar na nOileán Teoranta is the representative organisation for the off-shore islands

The continuation of active farming on the islands also results in the need to regularly maintain field boundaries, particularly, stone walls, which form part of the defensive structure of the coastline

The total area of the islands supported under this submeasure does not exceed 10% of the area of Ireland.

8.2.8.3.2.2. Type of support

Payment to be made annually.

8.2.8.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

n/a

8.2.8.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

In the order of 930 eligible farmers are expected to benefit under the measure.

8.2.8.3.2.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs are determined on the basis of the costs and income foregone linked to the specific constraints experienced by off shore island farmers. Island farmers already incur the additional costs and lower productivity that other mainland farmers situated on Areas of Natural Constraints also incur. However, there are additional costs borne by island farmers, which cover all of the main farming activities. These include higher input costs (fertiliser and machinery), animal feed, and other services such as veterinary, consultancy, and maintenance charges.

8.2.8.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

In order to be eligible, applicants must fulfil all the eligibility conditions applying to submeasure 13.2 apart from the requirement related to the minimum area of 3 hectares. In addition, applicants must be farming land on an offshore island.

8.2.8.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

No selection criteria apply to this measure.

8.2.8.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Payments are made annually per hectare.

The payment rates are as follows:

- The first 20 hectares of island land farmed - €250
- 20 to 34 hectares - €170
- 34 to 40 hectares - €70
- Over 40 hectares – no further payment will apply

The digressive nature of the payment is based on relevant economies of scale. The average payment for island land will exceed €25 per hectare.

8.2.8.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.8.3.2.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

Risks as set out for submeasure 13.2 will also apply to this submeasure. A further specific risk relates to ensuring that those claiming support are actually farming on an offshore island.

8.2.8.3.2.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

As set out in relation to submeasure 13.2, applicants in this submeasure will be subject to a range of checks.

In addition to the longstanding system of checks for the ANC scheme, a specific check will be put in place to ensure compliance with the requirement for applicants to be farming on an offshore island.

8.2.8.3.2.9.3. *Overall assessment of the measure*

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. A structured control process is in place which builds on the experience of implementing the LFA scheme in previous programming periods. Specific checks in relation to off shore island farming have been added to this process.

8.2.8.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

The island lands were already designated as Less Favoured Areas and, therefore, were already subjected to constraints and entitled to the exiting rates of aid under the Less Favoured Areas Scheme. In addition, the

farmers farming the island land are subject to more significant constraints which can be categorised in the table below with the additional costs also included;

Further to the additional costs for island farmers, there is also a negative impact on production. For example, the production of hay and silage where they can be harvested is restricted because of soil productivity and climatic conditions, which results in a lower yield. The preparation of cattle and sheep for the market is also restricted for the same reasons.

Category of costs	% Additional costs*
Farm Input costs (such as fertiliser)	150%
Animal feed (e.g. compound feed, hay and silage)	50%
Services (e.g. veterinary animal health)	130%
Other services (sheep shearing, agricultural consultancy)	66%
Additional island production costs	100%

* Compared to costs on ANC areas situated on mainland.

Island constraints and additional costs

8.2.8.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

Definition of the threshold level of area per holding on the basis of which the Member State calculates degressivity of payments

The highest rate of aid is payable on the first 20 hectares. The second aid level is payable on areas between 20 and 34 hectares.

The degressive rate of aid is based on the lower level of productivity on smaller-scale holdings and the impact of the additional costs such as service costs, which do not vary significantly irrespective of the size of the island holding. This degressive structure is designed to encourage island farmers to continue farming in an environmentally sustainable manner on the off shore islands. The vast majority of island holdings are small-scale farms with over 80% of all holdings less than 20 hectares. A further 12.5% have farms between 20 hectares and 34 hectares. The number of holdings greater than 40 hectares form a small part of the island

farming population at 5%.

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the local unit-level applied for the designation of the areas.

The off-shore islands can be designated at townland level.

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the application of the method including the criteria referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 for the delimitation of the three categories of areas referred to in that Article including the description and results of the fine-tuning exercise for areas facing natural and other specific constraints other than mountain areas.

8.2.8.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.8.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.8.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.8.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.8.5. *Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant*

As referenced above.

8.2.8.6. *Information specific to the measure*

Definition of the threshold level of area per holding on the basis of which the Member State calculates degressivity of payments

As referenced above.

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the local unit-level applied for the designation of the areas.

n/a

[Designation of areas facing natural and other specific constraints] Description of the application of the method including the criteria referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 for the delimitation of the three categories of areas referred to in that Article including the description and results of the fine-tuning exercise for areas facing natural and other specific constraints other than mountain areas.

n/a

8.2.8.7. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

n/a

8.2.9. M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

8.2.9.1. Legal basis

Articles 55-57 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (EIP for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability)

Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Co-operation)

8.2.9.2. General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives

Support under measure 16 will be limited to a maximum period of 7 years in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

This measure will comprise of the following two elements

- Sub-measures 16.1 - Support for European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) and
- Sub-measure 16.3 - Support for Collaborative Farming.

While it is not possible to pre-empt the exact projects that will emerge from the EIP process, overall the Co-operation Measure is expected to contribute towards the following Focus Areas :

- 2A - Economic performance, modernisation & restructuring,
- 2B – Entry into the agricultural sector and generational renewal,
- 4A – Biodiversity, HNV farming and landscapes,
- 4B – Water, fertiliser and pesticide management,
- 4C – Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management
- 5D - Reducing GHG & ammonia emissions

European Innovation Partnerships (EIP)

Current and future research, and the adaptation of it, can play an important part in underpinning increased efficiency and competitiveness by nurturing best practice in a wide range of areas such as maximising nutrient efficiencies, reducing emissions, informing adaptation and mitigating impacts of climate change, and the introduction of cutting edge production methods.

The RDP SWOT analysis highlighted the fact that Ireland has a well established and high quality agri-food and rural development public research and development system. It also indicated that there are well developed inter and intra institutional collaboration fora e.g. Science Foundation Ireland and Teagasc collaboration. These strengths, together with Ireland's small size, provide the basis for the creation of

effective European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) Operational Groups.

Greater linkages between research and on farm implementation need to be established, and this theme emerged both during the public consultation process and the SWOT analysis. Support under the EIP has been highlighted as a vehicle to address this. A further element of such linkage will be the need to disseminate best practice widely. The structure of EIP operational groups will incorporate such dissemination, for example through the National Rural Network and the European EIP. In this regard the EIP-AGRI Service Point will play an important role in the dissemination of results and findings as it will collect and share information on innovation-related policy measures, relevant research activities, funding opportunities, and lessons learned from practice-oriented projects. It will interact with the various stakeholders using multiple communication channels such as seminars, conferences, publications, website and social media. In this way the outputs from operational groups will be communicated to all actors ensuring that all lessons learned will be communicated beyond local level, and the benefits derived from the support for the groups can be realised internationally.

It is also possible that, as the priority areas for EIP operational groups emerge, climate change or emissions issues may be one area where support is focused. This would assist in the overall task of reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture. However, given the bottom up nature of support for this measure, it is not possible to guarantee this at this stage

EIP operational groups are clearly linked to supporting innovation and best practice. Specifically they will be intended to address all or some of the following:

- promoting a resource efficient, productive and low emission agricultural sector, working in harmony with the essential natural resources on which farming depends,
- improving processes to preserve the environment, adapt to climate change and mitigate it, and
- creating added value by better linking research and farming practice and encouraging the wider use of available innovative practices.

Support for Collaborative Farming

Internationally, and within Ireland, there are a number of farming arrangements which can be collectively described as ‘collaborative farming arrangements’ including share farming, contract rearing and farm partnerships. ‘Farm partnerships’ is the arrangement that commands the greatest interest in Ireland and is viewed by experts in the field as being a model that can assist in addressing a range of infrastructural issues identified in the RDP preparatory analysis such as poor land availability and farm size, work/life balance issues, the development of skills sets and the knowledge base, and intergenerational transfer.

Farm partnership: A Farm Partnership is where two or more persons in the agriculture sector, who hold their own separate herd numbers or who are individually registered for tax purposes and who possess the appropriate agriculture qualification or experience, join resources and efforts in order to bring added value to their enterprises and in turn share the profits accruing. The added value to the enterprise comes in the form of enhanced economic and social benefits, as well as occupational health, well-being and safety

benefits. The partnership works on the basis of a mutually agreed and binding Farm Partnership Agreement.

In the early 2000s DAFM, in recognising the negative effect a proliferation of one-person farms (often without any family input or involvement) could have on the long-term sustainability of the dairy sector, introduced the Milk Production Partnerships Scheme under the Milk Quota Regulations. The Scheme, which was introduced in conjunction with Teagasc, was, *inter alia*, aimed at addressing a shortage of quality land for milking platforms; improving work/life balance issues for dairy farmers; and most importantly, where appropriate, putting in place a mechanism to encourage the next generation into farming.

This Scheme will cease to exist on 31 March 2015 with the ending of the Milk Quota Regulations. Currently there are 720 registered Milk Production Partnerships in place. In the absence of the milk quota incentive, which was a significant ‘driver’ in encouraging farmers to consider such a collaboration, a new **Support for Collaborative Farming Grant Scheme** is now being established.

This Scheme will be backed by the introduction of a new Register of Farm Partnerships. This Register will be maintained by the Department and will come into effect in March, 2015 as the Milk Production partnership Register comes to an end. In order to be allowed entry to the Register a farm partnership must meet the following criteria

A Farm Partnership shall consist of at least two people who can be considered as actors in agriculture, one person from category (i) below and one or more person(s) from categories (i) or (ii):

- i. *A farmer who has been farming in his or her own right for two years preceding the date on which the partnership is established; and*
- ii. *A person who is in possession of an independent herd number or who is registered for tax purposes and who, having the appropriate agriculture qualifications, is contributing to the strengthening of the agricultural structures of the partnership by holding at least 20% in the profit sharing agreement; and who, if over 41 years of age, has an off farm income of less than €40k per annum.*

In order to qualify for support under this Scheme, a farm partnership must meet these criteria. Support will be available for partnerships which are formed between actors not from the same family as well as those formed within families (e.g. parent and child) In either case, the key requirement is that they are newly formed partnerships which meet the above requirements. This will ensure that support under this submeasure is clearly linked at the delivery of additional benefits. These requirements ensure that only partnerships between ‘separate actors’ are approved and that all parties have a clear role and interest in developing the new joint enterprise.

A number of studies have been carried out by researchers in Ireland as to the extent the formation of a farm partnership brings added value to the new enterprise. As highlighted by Macken-Walsh and Roche (2012) the benefits accruing from supporting the establishment of farm partnerships include:

- Farm Partnerships are used as a strategy to develop and increase scale by managing two, or more, previously independent enterprises together;
- Farm Partnerships are formed to increase efficiency by consolidating land and facilities and by developing new management strategies and business plans;
- Farm Partnerships assist farmers to share their work-loads in order to cope with the extra work involved in up-scaling and applying new technologies on the farm;

- Farm Partnerships introduce new skills, specialisations and occupational preferences to enhance the operation of the farm;
- Farm Partnerships foster new diversification activities on the farm by bringing in new expertise and business interests;
- Farm Partnerships facilitate off farm work;
- Farm Partnerships are used to share decision-making power between members of farm families (spouses, heirs, for example);
- Farm Partnerships reduce isolation in farmers' working lives and improve farm safety;
- Farm Partnerships facilitate a range of social and lifestyle benefits.

Many of these benefits can be seen to link back to the themes emerging from the RDP preparatory analyses.

Other forms of collaborative farming also exist in Ireland, namely share farming and contract rearing. It would be expected that these forms of collaboration would also lead to a range of similar benefits. However, detailed rules governing these arrangements are not yet in place. Once these rules are in place, the possibility of bringing these arrangements into this Scheme will be considered. This consideration will also take into account the ongoing monitoring of the take up in respect of Farm Partnerships in the early stages of the Scheme.

8.2.9.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.9.3.1. European Innovation Partnerships (EIP)

Sub-measure:

- 16.1 - support for the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability

8.2.9.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

Support for EIP operational groups will be channelled towards the setting up of new operational groups structured around a competitive fund. The establishment of Operation Groups will involve a two stage process.

An initial call for the submission of ideas for potential operational groups will be made with an outline of the scope and function of the prospective Operation Group being evaluated for relevance to the EIP programme and its compatibility with Rural Development Priorities.

Successful first stage applicants will then be requested to compile and submit a complete Operational Group

plan. This plan will detail the scope, costs and schedule for the Operational Group, and it will list the participants and detail their roles. Preparation costs for this submission will be covered.

A final approval process will take place with assessment based on the Operational Group's plans projected costs and timeframes based on established principles. This process will also involve assessment by a committee of relevant experts based on experience and existing research.

The goal of the measure is to close the innovation gap between research and practice using an interactive innovation model linking actors via an EIP Network fostering communication, partnering and dissemination of knowledge and ideas. Utilising existing Rural Development and knowledge transfer networks to raise awareness among potential operational group actors, the measure will foster the submission of innovative concepts and ideas from among farmers, advisors, researchers, NGOs and Agri-businesses.

Once selected, an operational group will be established to examine, evaluate, develop or trial the selected concept with the goal of developing, adapting or testing an innovative practice, process or product. An operational group will be required to establish internal procedures and draw up a project plan and also to disseminate the results of their project in accordance with Articles 56 and 57 of EU Regulation 1305/2013. Where Operational Groups are constituted as an individual actor, these requirements will also apply.

Support will be provided to cover feasibility studies, animation costs, installation costs, running costs, and promotion activities. Installation costs refer to costs incurred in setting up the operational group - administrative or infrastructural e.g. fencing to segregate sample animals. Although stand-alone research is not covered under this measure it is anticipated that certain operational groups may incur research related costs as part of the day to day running of the group - the costs to be covered here will relate to the cost of the researcher cooperating with the Operational Group.

Once completed the findings or outcome of the operational group will be disseminated via the EIP Network and the National Rural Network. The dissemination of the research findings through the EIP Network will ensure that the lessons learned are communicated beyond local level and thereby contribute to the overall objectives of sustainable agriculture production across the EU.

8.2.9.3.1.2. Type of support

Support in the form of grants will be provided in two separate stages

- a) support for the development of Operational Group Plans in phase 2 of the selection process
- b) support for the costs of implementing the Operational Group Plans for successful applicants. This will be based on the price set out in the successful applications.

8.2.9.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

Not applicable.

8.2.9.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

Operational groups will be clearly targeted at the involvement of a wide range of actors including farmers, advisors, researchers, NGOs, forest owners and agri-businesses, in order to encourage the cross fertilisation of approaches, ideas and experience. It is envisaged that operational groups can and should contain a wide range of individual actors and it is envisaged that the operational group will be the single beneficiary. However, it is also possible that an Operational Group could also consist of an individual actor. An Operational Group Plan will identify a lead-entity within the Operational Group who will have responsibility for the administration of payments.

The Operational Group Plan will detail responsibility among the Operational Group's constituent actors for the funds being received and identify ownership of any investment or assets that may exist once the project is finalised.

8.2.9.3.1.5. Eligible costs

As per Article 35 of the Rural Development Regulation, the eligible costs will include:

- the cost of studies of the area concerned and of drawing up a detailed business plan
- the costs of an innovation broker used to facilitate the creation of an Operational Group
- the cost related to a researcher cooperating with an Operational Group
- the cost of animation of the area concerned in order to make feasible a collective territorial project or a project to be carried out by an operational group
- the running costs of the co-operation
- the direct costs of specific projects linked to the implementation of a business plan or an environmental plan, and
- the cost of promotion activities.

While it is difficult to pre-empt what will emerge from the competitive process, successful projects may include investment costs. These will be eligible for payment under this Measure, subject to Article 45 of Regulation 1305/2013 and Chapter II articles 65-71 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

8.2.9.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

Following on from the consultation process, support will be channelled towards the setting up of new operational groups structured around a competitive fund. This will entail DAFM, in consultation with external stakeholders, identifying priority issues as a basis for a call for proposals. Such a call for proposals, and the subsequent evaluation of proposals received will necessarily draw on the relevant expertise and existing research. Any proposed operational group must develop or examine an approach, process, practice or product that contributes to Rural Development priorities and which seeks to target an innovative approach in doing so.

8.2.9.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Selection of the project proposals by way of the competitive process will be based on the following well-

established principles including:

- The quality of the proposal – demonstrable high quality scientific, technical and managerial attributes
- Relevance and impact – demonstrable links to Rural Development Priorities incorporating a targeting of innovative approaches
- Cost – the cost as set out in the proposal.
- Relevance of partnership

These criteria will be detailed in the initial call for proposals and each submission will be scored and ranked accordingly with a minimum score required to progress to further evaluation by an expert panel convened to oversee the process.

8.2.9.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support will be provided for feasibility studies, animation costs, running costs and promotion activities in accordance with Article 35. Amounts and rates will be based on the costs set out in successful proposals and will be reimbursed on the basis of returns/receipts received from Operational Groups. It is envisaged that a global amount will be paid without recourse to other measures, but in any case all support will be subject to Article 45 of Regulation 1305/2013 and Chapter II articles 65-71 of the Common Provisions Regulation

Support will be paid on the basis of tenders. However, as part of the control process DAFM may require receipts to verify completion of certain actions within the project. It is foreseen that the support amount will be the lower of the tender and receipted amounts. In no case will support be above the tender amount.

A support rate of 100% is envisaged.

Given the nature of EIPs it is possible that projects might arise which fall outside the agricultural field. In such instances, state aid clearance will be reviewed on a case by case basis (as set out in Chapter 13). In these circumstances, the 100% support rate would also be reviewed.

8.2.9.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.9.3.1.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

Risks associated with this measure centre around the failure of the operational group to deliver on the commitments set out in the successful tender and issues associated with the group's governance arrangements including financial management.

8.2.9.3.1.9.2. *Mitigating actions*

DAFM will undertake an open, transparent and rigorous selection and application process and will also

insure that the operational groups have in place adequate governance arrangements.

Initial proposals will be evaluated against existing practices, products and processes or previous evaluations of similar proposals. The merit, scientific or otherwise of the proposal will be evaluated against the overall cost of the proposal and its potential contribution to rural development priorities and established Departmental objectives.

The operational division responsible for managing and delivering the knowledge transfer suite of measures will ensure appropriate oversight on all aspects of the activities of EIP operational groups.

This will comprise of ongoing administrative checks on the financial management of the operational group. For example, receipts submitted can be checked against the tender documentation to ensure controls on expenditure.

8.2.9.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design

8.2.9.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

The call for proposals will specifically indicate the basis on which support will be provided and financial oversight will be provided by the division operating the suite of knowledge transfer measures. Costs eligible for support include feasibility studies, animation costs, installation costs, researcher cooperation costs, running costs, and promotion activities. The call for proposals will include cost as one of the selection criteria.

Support will be paid on the basis of tenders. However, as part of the DAFM control process, receipts may be required to verify completion of certain actions within the project. It is foreseen that the support amount will be the lower of the tender and receipted amounts. In no case will support be above the tender amount.

8.2.9.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Specification of the characteristics of pilot projects, clusters, networks, short supply chains and local markets

Not applicable.

8.2.9.3.2. Support for Collaborative Farming

Sub-measure:

- 16.3 - (other) co-operation among small operators in organising joint work processes and sharing facilities and resources, and for developing/marketing tourism

8.2.9.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

From mid 2015, when the new Register of Farm Partnerships is in place, all new farm partnerships meeting the requirements for entry on to the Register will be eligible to receive a contribution of 50% towards the vouched costs of legal, accounting and advisory costs involved in the setting up the partnership, up to a maximum of €2,500 (i.e. actual costs of €5,000 per partnership). This submeasure is specifically aimed at encouraging the formation of new farm partnerships.

The tangible outcome of support under this submeasure will be the establishment of legally binding partnership agreements.

In order to derive the maximum benefit from support, the submeasure will be targeted by way of selection criteria at factors addressing specific structural issues in Irish agriculture. These include issues related to the age structure of Irish agriculture, educational levels and knowledge base issues, and scale and efficiency of operation considerations.

8.2.9.3.2.2. Type of support

Support will be by way of a grant to the value of 50% of the administrative costs involved in establishing a new Farm partnership arrangement – i.e. vouched expenses for legal, accounting and advisory costs up to a maximum of €2,500.

8.2.9.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

Proposed Statutory Instrument on the Register of Farm Partnerships (due early 2015)

8.2.9.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

Farmers establishing new approved forms of collaborative farming (farm partnerships in this instance).

8.2.9.3.2.5. Eligible costs

Eligible costs here will include the legal, financial and business planning cost involved in setting up a new farm partnership arrangement.

8.2.9.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

All farm partnership arrangements must be newly formed arrangements being entered on the Register for the first time. Existing Milk Production Partnerships, who wish to continue in partnership after 31 March 2015 and who apply for entry on to the new Register will not qualify for support under this Measure.

8.2.9.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Selection criteria will be linked to Partnership arrangements that:

- Bring added value to the new enterprise, with priority being given to those that bring stronger economic potential to the new enterprise (e.g. dairying over sheep in an Irish context)
- Address issues of scale and efficiency by consolidating blocks of land previously held and operated by separate actors not within the same family
- Through the educational qualifications of the participants, are most likely to employ new skills and specialisation in the new enterprise
- Help to address the age structure of Irish agriculture by
 - a) including at least one actor who qualifies as a young farmer as defined in Regulation 1305/2013 as well as one actor over 60 years of age, or
 - b) including at least one actor who qualifies as a young farmer as defined in Regulation 1305/2013

The above selection criteria will be assigned marks in descending order in relation to how they are listed above. Thus, the 'bringing added value to the new enterprise' criteria will be given the highest rating and so on.

Selection criteria will be transparent and ensure impartiality of treatment. The submeasure will be operated in clearly defined tranches, with applicants in each tranche ranked and selected accordingly.

8.2.9.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

The maximum allowable cost for consideration in respect of administrative set up costs (legal, accounting and advisory) is €5,000. The measure will pay 50% of the allowable cost incurred up to a maximum of €2,500.

8.2.9.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.9.3.2.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

Risks involved in the operation of this measure include the farm partnership dissolving early and verifying the veracity of the documentation supporting applications.

8.2.9.3.2.9.2. Mitigating actions

In order to address the above, farm partnerships must commit in the Farm Partnership Agreement to maintain the arrangement for a minimum of 5 years. The processing of claims will include standard checks in relation to supporting documentation. Partnerships on the Register will also be incorporated into the inspection programme.

8.2.9.3.2.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design. The risks are deemed to be low.

8.2.9.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Farm Partnerships are, for the most part, organised through agricultural consultants who provide the necessary legal and financial advice and draw up a Farm Partnership Agreement. The following are the activities and associated maximum costs involved in establishing a farm partnership.

The costs detailed below are the maximum amount payable under the Farm Partnerships scheme.

Meet the potential partners individually and collectively; acquire background information regarding accounts, Department payments, livestock numbers, machinery, buildings, land, farm layout etc., as well as farm usage of electricity and water use and farm vehicle costs .	€500
Visits to each farm, assess adequateness of existing buildings and facilities and how much capital investment is required, and produce rough drafts of physical and financial plans., meet both parties and finalise the plans	€1500
Draw up, agree and sign off on Business Plan (including physical and financial plans)	€500
Draw up Farm Partnership Agreement (or Share Farming or Contract Rearing Agreement as appropriate) and send to the partners' respective solicitors and accountants	€1500
Complete the Farm Partnership Agreement (or Share Farming or Contract Rearing Agreement as appropriate) and sign-off	€500
Assist the partners to gather the necessary application documentation for registration and assist with the completion and submission of that documentation.	€500



Collaborative Farming Table 1

8.2.9.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

Specification of the characteristics of pilot projects, clusters, networks, short supply chains and local markets

This measure will not apply to existing Milk Production Partnerships who move across to the new Register.

8.2.9.4. *Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations*

8.2.9.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.9.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.9.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.9.5. *Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant*

As referenced above.

8.2.9.6. *Information specific to the measure*

Specification of the characteristics of pilot projects, clusters, networks, short supply chains and local markets

As referenced above.

8.2.9.7. *Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure*

As referenced above.

8.2.10. M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

8.2.10.1. *Legal basis*

Articles 42-44 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (EAFRD regulation - LEADER)

Articles 32-35 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (Common provisions regulation - Community led local development)

8.2.10.2. *General description of the measure including its intervention logic and contribution to focus areas and cross-cutting objectives*

A community led local development (CLLD) approach to rural development; LEADER has formed part of the policy framework for rural development in Ireland since its inception in the 1990s. In the 2007-2013 programming period, LEADER was the main method of delivering interventions aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas and supporting the diversification of the rural economy. It has proven to be an effective tool for supporting the economic and social development of rural communities by providing the resources necessary for communities to support their own development.

The continuation of the LEADER approach in rural areas is critical for the future development of rural Ireland. However, the implementation of LEADER in the 2007-2013 period has presented a number of challenges and the Certifying Body has indicated a series of on-going issues that need to be addressed for the 2014-2020 programming period. These include, in particular, challenges relating to regulatory/audit compliance at Local Action Group (LAG) level and financial solvency/capacity of the legal entities implementing LEADER.

In the belief that rural communities are best placed to identify and address the issues and challenges they face, Ireland is currently moving towards a more integrated approach to the delivery of local development interventions and the participation of communities is central to the implementation of this approach. The LEADER approach is an essential tool to facilitate this in rural Ireland. *Putting People First*, the Irish Government action plan for better local government, specifically details actions to ensure a more coordinated and inclusive approach to the delivery of local development interventions including those funded under the RDP.

The SWOT and needs analysis have identified a number of challenges in rural Ireland for which a community-led local development methodology such as LEADER is an appropriate delivery mechanism.

These include, but are not limited to, the need to support local business, the need to involve all members of the community including young people in the development process and the need to ensure that rural development interventions are an integral part of all plans and policies designed to address local development thereby ensuring a more integrated approach to the development of Ireland as a whole.

In order to promote a more coordinated and effective approach to local development and ensure a more locally-led, integrated approach to the implementation of LEADER as well as addressing the issues identified during the 2007-2013 period there are a number of changes to the delivery mechanisms in respect of the LEADER approach for the 2014-2020 programming period compared to the previous RDP.

LEADER Implementation 2014-2020

Sub-Regional Areas

As previously outlined, for the purposes of the RDP 2014-2020, rural areas in Ireland are defined as those areas outside the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford.

Ireland is reconfiguring the way in which local and rural development interventions are implemented in sub-regional areas. This is in line with Government policy that local government supports the effective and efficient delivery of local services, including rural development interventions, as part of the overall vision for local government to be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably. This will also facilitate more effective methods of oversight, coordination and support for the MA to ensure that the impact of all funding available to the sub-regional area is maximised. Accordingly, sub-regional areas will correspond with the County Council administrative areas in the first instance.

There are significant urban populations in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin County Council areas. Rural communities can be found in each of these administrative areas. As these areas are statistically small and contained within one geographical county boundary they will be considered as one sub-regional area.

In view of the size of the Cork County Council area there will be three sub-regional areas for that County. This will mean 28 sub-regional areas in Ireland for LEADER purposes. In order to ensure sufficient budgetary resources to LAGs to facilitate full and effective implementation of LDSs, Ireland will apportion the overall programme complement on the basis of these 28 sub-regional administrative areas using open and transparent criteria.

While the selection process will allow for the emergence of a number of proposals for LDSs in any given sub-regional area, in the interest of supporting a coherent and integrated approach to local and rural development, the aim will be to facilitate in as far as is possible one LDS for each sub-regional area. If more than one qualifying LDS emerges for a sub-regional area, the available funding for that area will be shared to support the implementation of all LDSs selected in that area. These allocations will also be based on open and transparent criteria, including the needs identified in the selected LDSs and the requirements for complementarity and demarcation between LDSs. The minimum indicative budget for each LDS selected will be in the range €2m to €2.5m.

In line with Article 33(6) of the CPR regulation[1] which prescribes that the population of LAG areas must be not less than 10,000 and not more than 150,000 inhabitants, LAGs will be required to outline in their LDS the populations to be covered by the strategy. The regulatory framework also provides for LDSs with populations outside of these parameters to take account of sparsely or densely populated areas, the functions of certain towns as facilitators of rural development or to ensure territorial coherence. This potential was identified in Ireland's partnership agreement and the LDS selection process will require LDSs to provide a robust rationale for any LDS that covers a population outside the prescribed range.

Partnership Approach

Ireland will support the implementation of rural development interventions through the LEADER element of the RDP 2014-2020 at the sub-regional levels outlined above using a partnership approach. This will draw on the skills and expertise of local public and private socio-economic interests, including local development expertise, local authorities, community and voluntary organisations, etc., in consultation with the wider population. These strategic priorities will then provide the basis for programme-specific priorities in each sub-regional area. This will lead to a more integrated and coherent approach to local development that involves community and local government organisations in leadership roles, guiding a more integrated and coordinated approach to the delivery of all funding (both European and National) at a sub-regional level.

New six year Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) are being developed for each of local authority area as part of the local government reform process. The LECP is to be an integrated plan for the economic development and community development of the functional area of the local authority, with the economic elements of the LECP being developed by the local authority and the community elements being developed by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) - the committee of the local authority charged with developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. Public, stakeholder and community participation in preparing each of the elements of the LECPs is a crucial requirement, with specific provision for community participation in the preparation of the community element of the LECPs. Integrated LECPs will be adopted by each local authority during 2015, with a requirement that they be consistent with the local authority Development Plan and the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (also being introduced as part of the local government reform process). LECPs will thus establish a framework for a more integrated approach to the delivery of a wide range of public-funded economic, local and community development supports at local authority level, including those funded under the RDP. Accordingly, as part of a more co-ordinated and joined-up planning approach, each LDS must be consistent with the LECPs as well as relevant EU, national and regional policies.

In the context of the RDP, this approach envisages community representatives and local/development agencies working in partnership with local authorities through the LCDCs to ensure that all approved LDSs at sub-regional level are complementary and address the strategic priorities identified in the planning processes. These strategic and programme-specific priorities will form part of an overall planning process at local level that is integrated with planning processes at regional, national and European levels thereby addressing the need for a more integrated approach to support for rural development at sub regional level. The need for co-ordination with economic and community development processes will be a requirement for

each LDS selected.

Sub-Regional Co-ordination

In order to support the development of vibrant communities where people want to live and work and to ensure that rural areas do not fall behind urban areas with regard to economic development, unemployment and social inclusion, integrated plans and actions to support the development of small enterprise and job creation will be developed. This will require the effective and co-ordinated use of all available resources to support local development in rural areas.

Funding provided under the LEADER measure will support members of rural communities to participate fully in their communities from an economic, social and cultural perspective. With the integrated approach to local development proposed by Ireland for the 2014-2020 period, the development of the LDS for the LEADER element of the RDP in close alignment with the broader economic and social development planning processes at local level will help ensure complementarity and demarcation when it comes to support for social inclusion and other initiatives funded by the EAFRD.

An integrated planning process at local level will ensure coherence and complementarity with other available supports. The LCDC is charged with the co-ordination of the social and community aspects of the overall county planning process and will have representation from the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) on the decision-making element of the LCDC to ensure coherence with the economic aspects of the LECP. Relevant protocols will be put in place to ensure that there is full co-ordination between enterprise support available under the LEADER element of the RDP and other enterprise supports available at a local level.

The Local Development Strategy Selection Process

The LDS selection process will be open and transparent and will consist of two separate stages providing the opportunity for all interested LAGs to participate. This incremental approach will also support the development of a more robust partnership approach at local level and facilitate full and comprehensive consultation to maintain the integrity of the CLLD approach.

A pre-qualification/expression of interest (EOI) stage will involve an open call, appropriate for LCDCs, current LDCs and any other groupings that wish to be considered for delivery of LEADER. This stage will be open to any entity that can show broad local and community participation and that has a coherent vision for the development of their area. Interested groups will also be asked to outline the preparatory resources they may require in order to support the design and development of their LDS. While 28 sub-regional areas will be outlined as the MA's preferred outcome, there will be no limit on the number of LAGs that can express an interest from within a sub-regional area.

The EOIs will be evaluated and entities selected to develop prospective LDSs by an independent Evaluation Committee, comprising an independent chair, the PA, the MA and external rural and local development expertise, serviced by Pobal (the not-for-profit organisation established to manage various funding programmes on behalf of the Government and the EU and to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality – see <https://www.pobal.ie/Pages/Home.aspx>).

It is preferable that one LDS emerge from each area where possible in order to support Irish Government policy for a coherent and integrated approach to local and rural development. At all stages prior to final selection of the LDSs, the MA will work with entities that express an interest to cooperate and develop a partnership to design and implement one LDS per sub-regional area. Throughout the LDS design process, all interested entities will be requested to maintain local dialogue to encourage the formation of a single LAG. DECLG will continue to encourage the one LDS approach in order to support coherent rural development in sub-regional areas and facilitate co-ordination between local authorities and entities supporting local development to ensure better outcomes for the areas concerned. The ultimate aim is to facilitate the development of robust, implementable strategies that address the needs of the sub-regional area and that are complementary to other development processes at sub-regional, regional, national and European level.

The funding available will be distributed across the 28 sub-regional areas based on open and transparent criteria. If more than one qualifying LDS emerges from an individual sub-regional area, the available funding for that area will be shared to support the implementation of all selected LDSs in that area, again based on open and transparent criteria and taking into account the requirements for complementarity and demarcation between LDSs.

The EOI stage will also assess the entities for individual preparatory support and provide capacity-building support through collective actions to build the capacity of interested entities to become LAGs for LEADER purposes. This preparatory support will be provided to support potential LAGs to develop an LDS for their area.

The **second stage** of the process will be the LDS development phase and will involve all LAGs that have achieved LAG designation in stage one. The criteria provided for this stage of the selection process will be in the form of a template for the structure of the LDS as well as criteria around governance within the LAG and management systems to support the delivery of the LDS. The criteria for this stage will not involve assessing financial capacity in respect of the delivery of LEADER as a State guarantee will be provided to ensure that all LAGs have the necessary financial framework in place to access the advances envisaged in the regulations. However, LAGs may need to demonstrate sufficient independent financial capacity if its constituents are engaged in the delivery of other programmes. Entities will be given a minimum of 6 months to design their LDS and once submitted LDSs will be evaluated and selections made by the independent Evaluation Committee. This evaluation and selection may take place prior to the expiration of the 6 months where it is clear that no more than one LDS will emerge in a sub-regional area.

Each LAG will be required to work within the partnership frameworks at local level in order to ensure that wider development priorities are complemented by the LDSs for the RDP. The aim of this process is to ensure that the all development planning processes are working together to maximise the impact of all funding, national and European, allocated to any particular sub-regional area to support local and rural development.

LEADER Themes

The objectives of the LEADER measure is to fund initiatives emerging from a community-led local development approach at local level that aim to address the needs of individual sub-regional areas. These local objectives will be specific to each individual area but will contribute to both the aims and objectives of each individual LDS as well as addressing social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development of rural areas as outlined in the programme priorities.

The guidance documentation to accompany the LDS development process will outline a series of indicative “LEADER Themes” that have been developed from the evidence gathered during the SWOT and needs analysis processes. This also includes information contained in the 2014 report of the Commission on the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) that examined the challenges for and potential of rural Ireland. A number of themes emerged strongly from all of these processes and have a strong evidence base for use in LDSs. These themes will be offered as indicative themes for LDS development and each LDS will be required to examine the potential of these sectors within the LDS process and in the context of an integrated regional and local planning approach. However in line with the ‘bottom-up’ nature of the LEADER methodology, LAGs will be permitted to outline their strategies based on the specific needs identified in their particular areas and in the context of the priorities indicated for support under LEADER in the Partnership Agreement and the RDP.

As LEADER will be programmed under priority 6 of the RDP, it will aim to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and the economic development of rural areas. As LEADER interventions are supported through the framework of a LDS that is specific to the sub-regional area it is addressing, the specific objectives to be addressed by each strategy will be different. The primary measure of eligibility for projects funded through the LEADER approach will be to contribute to the aims and objectives of the LDS. However each LDS will be required to outline and demonstrate the linkages between the aims and objectives of the strategy and the overall objective of priority 6 which is the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Indicative Themes

1 Rural Economic Development / Enterprise Development and Job Creation

The need to support the development of the rural economy has been identified as a critical challenge in both the needs analysis and other research regarding rural development in Ireland. A number of potential thematic areas have been identified where intervention under the LEADER elements of the RDP could support the economic development of rural areas. All of these thematic areas should be facilitated through on-going support for the building of community capacity to actively contribute to the economic development of rural areas. These areas are offered as indicative themes with an established evidence base

for the development of LDS. This list is not exhaustive and the priorities ultimately identified through the LDS design process will emerge from the needs analysis at sub-regional level.

1a Rural Tourism

Tourism plays a very significant role in the rural economy and continued support for a varied and innovative rural tourism sector is critical to the future development of rural communities in Ireland. Areas such as rural recreation, adventure tourism, food tourism, cultural and heritage initiatives, festivals, other events and destination management have all been identified as areas of significant potential that require investment in order to contribute to the continued development of the rural economy.

1b Enterprise Development

In the context of enterprise development, and in line with the overall aims of the RDP, specific focus should also be placed on diversification opportunities for farm families. A number of specific areas of enterprise potential have been identified through the needs analysis process and are offered as indicative areas for consideration in the LDS development process.

- Support for food producers, incorporating:
 - Support for artisan food producers, including a focus on collaborative proposals aimed at production quality and market issues;
 - Support for regional product development, including a focus on marketing distinctive local foodstuffs; and
 - Marketing and processing support for strategically identified sectors, including honey and apple processors.

- €15 million of the overall budget has been allocated specifically to support collaboration between food producers in the three areas outlined above. This funding will be delivered using the LEADER methodology. The Scheme aims to improve marketing, product quality and business skills through support for innovative collaborative processes and so address the challenges to co-operation identified in studies on facilitating short supply chains – e.g. entry barriers, the need for shared understanding, skills/training, and marketing and business skills deficits. See Section 8.2.8.3.1.6 below.

- Renewable Energies
- Marine
- Social Enterprise
- Creative Industries

1c Broadband

The support provided for rural communities in the context of increased access to and use of modern

communications infrastructure will be complementary to the other initiatives already in place to support more comprehensive rural broadband infrastructure. It is envisaged that this will focus mainly on training and capacity building. In line with the bottom-up approach, individual sub-regional area needs will be outlined in the LDS.

1d Rural Towns

There is a body of evidence suggesting that Irish rural towns and their hinterlands have felt the negative impacts of the economic downturn in the recent past more than other areas. As rural towns are often the centre of the local rural economy, measures must be taken to address this as Ireland emerges from the current economic crisis or there is a danger that they will be unable to avail of emerging opportunities. Rural towns generally are at the heart of rural communities and the LEADER methodology is particularly suited to addressing the challenges that the reinvigoration of such towns will present. Initiatives to support the development of these towns and their hinterlands should be integrated and area-based and will require innovative and cooperative solutions; all characteristics of the LEADER approach to rural development.

In light of the findings the Report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas and the needs identified throughout the RDP consultation process Ireland may allocate a portion of the LEADER element of the RDP to focus on supporting the development of Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)/Rural Towns specifically.

Initiatives would be implemented using the LEADER approach and delivered through a call for proposals to LEADER Local Action Groups in line with the needs and challenges identified in their LDS and would be based largely on the potential of such zones and/or rural towns to contribute to their own economic development and the economic development of their rural hinterlands. In order to maintain the integrity of the bottom-up approach it will reserve decisions regarding this possibility until Local Development Strategies are more developed.

2. Social inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation

A central focus will be the need to ensure the social cohesion of a sub-regional area i.e. not just to support economic development but also to support social inclusion and address issues of social exclusion and marginalisation. In order to facilitate this, there is a need to ensure that communities are empowered and supported to develop their own capacity to engage at a local level with the processes that influence their development. This could include initiatives such as leadership and skills training, training that relates to governance, policies and procedures required to support proactive community participation and capacity building around socio-economic planning and implementation at a local level.

Addressing social inclusion in particular is very area specific however there are also some challenges that have been identified at a national level and through implementation of the 2007-2013 RDP that will need to be addressed in the LDS development processes including, but not limited, to;

1. Basic Services targeted at hard to reach communities
2. Rural Youth

3. Rural Environment

While recognising that the environment is a cross-cutting issue and in this context will be considered in the context of all LEADER interventions there were a number of specific areas that also emerged from the needs analysis process. Those included the need to promote the targeted achievement of multiple environmental objectives including the protection and sustainable use of water resources, the protection and improvement of local biodiversity and the development of renewable energy.

LEADER and Cross-Cutting Issues

The LEADER approach through its positioning at the heart of rural communities is uniquely placed to address all of these needs in the context of supporting social inclusion and poverty reduction in rural Ireland. The 2014-2020 programme period will see a concerted effort by Ireland to ensure a more integrated and targeted approach to supporting local development which is anchored in a strong evidence base and supported by co-ordinated delivery mechanisms, with the aim of ensuring a more effective and efficient delivery of LEADER interventions.

The LDS design process will contain criteria to ensure that all local development strategies address each of the three main cross-cutting issues of innovation, climate change and environment. Capacity-building initiatives through the preparatory support element of the LEADER measure will also support rural communities to develop ideas that encourage and support all of the cross-cutting issues both as potential areas for stand-alone projects as well as ensuring that these issues form part of the assessment process for all relevant supported operations.

Innovation is one of the cornerstones of the LEADER approach and has always been a high priority at sub-regional level in Ireland. Experience in the 2007-2013 programming period would also indicate a high level of participation in projects that support environmental protection and awareness in rural communities, and evidence from the needs analysis, strongly indicates a desire at local level to engage with environmental initiatives in the 2014-2020 programming period also.

[1] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>

[DK1]Text clarifying €15 million allocation for food added here. Further text added in under sub-measure 19.2

8.2.10.3. Scope, level of support, eligible beneficiaries, and where relevant, methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate broken down by sub-measure and/or type of operation where necessary. For each type of operation specification of eligible costs, eligibility conditions, applicable amounts and support rates and principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

8.2.10.3.1. LEADER Implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy

Sub-measure:

- 19.2 - Support for implementation of operations under the community-led local development strategy

8.2.10.3.1.1. Description of the type of operation

LEADER is a community-led local development approach to the delivery of Rural Development Interventions. Such interventions will be delivered based on the design and implementation of tailored sub-regional development strategies that are based on identified needs at a sub-regional level. LDSs will be developed on the basis of comprehensive analysis of the development needs and potential of sub-regional areas and will contain a detailed outline of how the needs are to be addressed using RDP funding

8.2.10.3.1.2. Type of support

The support provided to achieve the aims and objectives of the LDS will be in the form of grant aid.

8.2.10.3.1.3. Links to other legislation

Articles 32-35 and 65-71 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (CPR)

8.2.10.3.1.4. Beneficiaries

LAGs and other local actors including private investors and State agencies. Detailed systems of demarcation will be in place to avoid overlap and double funding.

8.2.10.3.1.5. Eligible costs

The LEADER approach differentiates itself from other, more top-down approaches to development through the characteristics that ensure its on-going and consistent linkages to the communities in which the funded interventions are situated. Accordingly, the interventions tend to be small scale, using complex and integrated approaches to solving locally-based specific challenges. Often the approaches taken are innovative and are designed to address challenges in a particular area and its environs thereby fostering community co-operation both within and between adjacent areas to maximise impact. While maximum flexibility to deliver the aims and objectives of a LDS will be supported, to maintain the integrity of the community-based nature of the approach, these characteristics should be promoted and where possible

projects funded through the LEADER approach should display as many of these characteristics as possible.

However, in line with the bottom up nature of LEADER and with regulatory requirements, individual operations shall be eligible if they contribute to achieving the objectives of the LDS and correspond to the objectives and priorities indicated for support under LEADER in the Partnership Agreement and the RDP. Specific items of eligible expenditure will include;

- The construction, acquisition or improvement of immovable property;
- The purchase or lease purchase of new machinery and equipment including computing software up to the market value of the asset; and
- General costs linked to the project such as architect, engineer and consultation fees, feasibility studies and the acquisition of patents or licences.

8.2.10.3.1.6. Eligibility conditions

Individual operations shall be eligible if they contribute to achieving the aims and objectives of the LDS and correspond to the objectives and priorities indicated for support in the RDP. For the 2014-2020 programming period, and in line with a more concerted effort to promote a more integrated approach to rural development at a local level, it is proposed to support integrated LEADER projects by facilitating systems that allow for co-funding with other public bodies as well as private and community co-funding. It is also proposed to support more co-ordinated interventions at a local level through the use of umbrella projects particularly in the context of the rural youth and hard to reach communities themes outlined. The systems implemented will be outlined in detail in the LEADER operating rules and both integrated projects and umbrella projects will be fully monitored to ensure compliance with relevant regulatory requirements including double funding.

In relation to the delivery of the €15million allocation to the Agri-Food measures described in Section 8.2.8.2, this funding will not be assigned to individual LDS budgets but will be allocated using an open call for proposals to LEADER LAGS. In order to make a submission to the proposed scheme the need to address challenges in the sectors outlined in Section 8.2.8.2 would have to be identified as needs requiring support within the LDS framework for the sub-regional area and this will form part of the criteria for any call for proposals for this scheme. While implemented by LEADER LAGs, any beneficiary of this funding must be a registered food producer and propose a joint plan to improve market knowledge and insight, product quality, production sustainability and/or marketing of their food products and developing new and innovative routes to market. Selection criteria of the call for proposals will reflect these requirements. With regards to a possible allocation of programme funding to support a rural economic development zones/rural towns initiative (if implemented), this funding will not be assigned to individual LDS budgets but would be allocated using an open call for proposals to LEADER LAGS. In order to make a submission to the proposed scheme rural towns would have to be identified in the LDS as a priority area and this will form part of the criteria for any call for proposals for this scheme. While implemented by LEADER LAGs, it is envisaged that, in line with the evidence presented in the CEDRA report, any proposal would involve a collaborative effort at a local level actively involving community representatives and local authorities and would include the use of LEADER funding in conjunction with funding from other sources to maximise the impact of all available funding. It is intended to conduct a pilot REDZ initiative in the coming months using national funding which will be used as a learning tool for moving forward with a more comprehensive scheme under the LEADER elements of the RDP.

8.2.10.3.1.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

As outlined in the regulatory framework (Article 34 (b) 1303/2013) the principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria are to be defined in the LDS by the LAG.

Ireland will continue to use an on-going applications system for the selection of projects for funding where applications can be accepted by the LAG for a project that supports the aims and objectives of its LDS at any time during the programme period subject to budgetary considerations. This system will be complemented by a system of calls for proposals in order to encourage a more qualitative approach to evaluation for more significant projects. In particular, the funding available to the Agri Food measures described above will be delivered using the call for proposals method.

However, while the MA will support and encourage this type of system, it will ultimately be the responsibility of the LAG to determine which systems are best suited to the implementation of the LEADER approach in their sub-regional area.

In the case of projects where the LAG or a LAG member is a beneficiary, robust systems to address conflict of interest will be required as part of the development of management systems at LAG level. Administrative checks required under Article 28 EU Reg 809/2014 on projects such as these will be performed by an external agency in order to ensure such projects are eligible and compliant.

LAG selection of projects should be based on a documented assessment that considers the aims and objectives of the LDS as well as the priorities indicated for support in the RDP. Assessment of requests for support should be fair, fully documented and transparent and be based on consistent and relevant criteria.

8.2.10.3.1.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

LAGs will be afforded some opportunity to fix the aid intensity for operations funded under the LDS based on the strategic role these operations can play in the context of their LDS and in line with the aid intensity rates provided for in the legal framework and relevant State Aid limitations. The possibility of aid intensity rates of up to 100% (EU and national co-financing) will be available for all interventions funded under the LEADER elements of the RDP. However, in line with Commission guidance, Ireland will require an element of co-financing of individual operations by public and/or private investors for most approved operations, in order to promote community ownership of the funded projects. Ireland envisages 100% aid intensity for capacity building and training interventions funded through LEADER. Further detail on specific aid intensity rates available for particular types of projects will be clarified in the detailed operating rules that accompany the LEADER elements of the RDP.

Ireland may allow for the payment of an advance of up to 50% of the public aid related to the investment from the competent paying agencies as allowed for in the regulatory framework.

8.2.10.3.1.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.10.3.1.9.1. *Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures*

The bottom-up nature of the LEADER methodology requires robust and manageable systems for financial control and regulatory compliance. Implementation of the LEADER operations during the 2007-2013 programming period has identified a number of areas of risk and afforded a substantial learning process with

regard to the types of systems required in order to mitigate this risk. The main risks identified relate to issues such as

- the financial capacity of LAGs which were standalone legal entities and the need to ensure the sustainability of operations funded through the RDP by ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework particularly as it pertains to sound financial management.
- Audit findings in areas such as administrative procedures, financial controls and reporting, and public procurement issues.

8.2.10.3.1.9.2. Mitigating actions

All expenditure will be subject to standard control procedures for correct financial management and audit compliance. This will be fully clarified to all LAGs interested in developing an LDS and they will be fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to sound financial management before they embark on the LDS implementation process.

Ireland is proposing some changes to the delivery mechanisms for LEADER in the 2014-2020 period in order to mitigate issues identified relating to the financial capacity of LAGs and improve the capacity of the system as a whole to address issues of regulatory and financial compliance. This will include the management of Article 28 Administrative Checks by a public authority either inside or outside of the LAG or other State appointed body as appropriate.

As also referenced in Section 18, a number of initiatives are in place to address issues highlighted in audits in the 2007-2013 programming period. These include the provision of targeted training and capacity building support, and the provision of detailed operating guidelines which will specifically address the issues identified.

8.2.10.3.1.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.10.3.1.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Not applicable.

8.2.10.3.1.11. Information specific to the operation

Description of the obligatory community-led local development (hereafter "CLLD") elements of which the LEADER measure is composed: preparatory support, implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy, preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group (hereafter "LAG"), running costs and animation, referred to in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Support for operations funded through LDSs is at the centre of the LEADER approach to Rural

Development. LEADER funding in the 2007-2013 period was implemented largely through a system of continuous and on-going open calls for project proposals at local level. While this method for project selection will remain, the 2014-2020 system will also support a more targeted call for proposals system. This system will facilitate the consideration of proposed interventions within the context of comparable/competitive interventions thereby ensuring that only the most suitable interventions are ultimately awarded funding.

While the essence of the LEADER approach is to support the engagement of rural communities in their own development, it is also critical that the support delivered through these operations is sustainable and compliant with relevant regulations. Ireland is committed to ensuring that the implementation systems for LEADER in the 2014-2020 period promote the integrity of the LEADER approach while simultaneously facilitating efficient and effective systems that support regulatory compliance with minimum administrative burden on beneficiaries.

Description of the use of the LEADER start-up-kit referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 as specific type of preparatory support if relevant

Description of the system for ongoing application for LEADER co-operation projects referred to in Article 44(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The procedure and timetable to select the local development strategies

Justification for selection of geographical areas for local development strategy implementation whose population falls outside the limits laid down in Article 33(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Co-ordination with the other European Structural and Investment (hereafter "ESI") Funds as regards CLLD, including possible solution applied with regard to the use of the lead fund option, and any global complementarities between the ESI Funds in financing the preparatory support

Possibility or not of paying advances

Definition of the tasks of the Managing Authority, the paying agency and the LAGs under LEADER, in particular with regard to a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations referred to in Article 34(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

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Description of co-ordination mechanisms foreseen and complementarities ensured with operations supported under other rural development measures especially as regards: investments in non-agricultural activities and business start-up aid under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; investments under Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; and co-operation under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, in particular implementation of local development strategies by public-private partnerships

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8.2.10.3.2. LEADER Preparation and Implementation of cooperation activities of the local action groups

Sub-measure:

- 19.3 - Preparation and implementation of cooperation activities of the local action

8.2.10.3.2.1. Description of the type of operation

This element of the LEADER measure will support the preparation and implementation of cooperation activities of the LAG. Transnational and inter-territorial co-operation will be supported under this measure. Co-operation is allowable between Leader groups and other non-Leader groups provided the project involved is led and co-ordinated by a Leader group. Support will be available for innovative and experimental approaches to promoting joint ventures addressing common issues

The types of operations envisaged under this sub-measure should contribute to the aims and objectives outlined in the LDS of all cooperating partners and the value of the cooperation itself should be in addition to the project itself. Ireland will avail of the possibility contained in Article 34(5) 1303/2013 and the MA will select operations and fix the amount of support for cooperation activities.

Co-operation may not consist purely of an exchange of information but must consist of a joint project between the groups involved. Exchange of information will be supported in the context of preparation for the design and implementation of a proposed project. Special emphasis is placed on co-ordination of activities at the regional level, with particular emphasis on tourism and environmental co-operation initiatives. Co-operation must demonstrate genuine added value for the territories concerned.

8.2.10.3.2.2. Type of support

The support provided for cooperation activities will be in the form of grant aid.

Preparation

In this context, preparatory activity, co-ordination and animation are eligible for funding. Some elements of preparatory funding may be supported at 100% (training and capacity building).

Implementation

Support provided for the implementation of co-operation projects will be in the form of grant aid. It is envisaged that implementation of cooperation projects will involve some financial input from the territories concerned.

8.2.10.3.2.3. Links to other legislation

Article 32-35 and 65-71 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (CPR)

8.2.10.3.2.4. Beneficiaries

LAGs and other local actors.

8.2.10.3.2.5. Eligible costs

Preparatory Support

Costs of technical preparation for inter-territorial or transnational co-operation project.

Project Implementation Support

Costs of co-operation projects within a Member State (inter-territorial co-operation) or co-operation projects between territories in several Member States or with territories in third countries (transnational co-operation).

8.2.10.3.2.6. Eligibility conditions

A concrete project must be envisaged in order to avail of support under the co-operation element of the LEADER measure. The criteria for selection of cooperation projects to be funded both in the context of preparing and implementing a co-operation project will be detailed in the operating rules for the programme and the need to support this kind of intervention must be identified in the LDS.

The MA will facilitate a system of on-going applications for both inter territorial and transnational cooperation projects. The MAs in both Northern and Southern Ireland will provide particular support for those projects that relate to North-South co-operation with a view to improving the outcomes for those projects going forward. In this context, a system of calls for proposals to LAGs may be used for particular areas of interventions for example Rural Tourism.

8.2.10.3.2.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

General principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria for co-operation projects will be set out in the overall programme operating rules and further elaborated in individual calls for proposals as outlined above facilitating the inclusion of additional criteria depending on the project type envisaged, e.g. Rural Tourism. The Managing Authority will publish guidance for the development of co-operation projects. The guidance will look at inter territorials and transnationals and will have a particular focus on North-South Ireland projects where MAs will work together to support the LAGS to develop co-operation projects at a local level.

8.2.10.3.2.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

While the MA will select cooperation projects, the selections will be made on the basis of recommendations from LAGS taking consideration of the LDS budget, the strategic role these operations can play in the context of individual LDS and in line with the aid intensities rate provided for in the legal framework and relevant State Aid limitations. As outlined above, some measure of co-financing by a public or private

investor will be required for approved operations with the exception of capacity building and training.

8.2.10.3.2.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.10.3.2.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

The bottom-up nature of the LEADER methodology requires robust and manageable systems for financial control and regulatory compliance. Implementation of the LEADER operations during the 2007-2013 programming period has identified a number of areas of risk and afforded a substantial learning process with regard to the types of systems required in order to mitigate this risk. The main risks centre on the financial capacity of LAGs and the need to ensure the sustainability of operations funded through the RDP by ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework particularly as it pertains to sound financial management.

8.2.10.3.2.9.2. Mitigating actions

All expenditure will be subject to standard control procedures for correct financial management and audit compliance. This will be fully clarified to all LAGs selected to implement an LDS and they will be fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to sound financial management before they embark on the LDS implementation process.

As outlined, Ireland is proposing some changes to the delivery mechanisms for LEADER in the 2014-2020 period in order to mitigate issues identified relating to the financial capacity of LAGs and improve the capacity of the system as a whole to address issues of regulatory and financial compliance.

8.2.10.3.2.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.10.3.2.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Methodologies for the assessment of amount of support will be contained within the operating rules for the programme and will be further elaborated as part of the calls for proposals for co-operation activities at sub-regional level if appropriate.

8.2.10.3.2.11. Information specific to the operation

Description of the obligatory community-led local development (hereafter "CLLD") elements of which the LEADER measure is composed: preparatory support, implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy, preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group (hereafter "LAG"), running costs and animation, referred to in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

As per Article 34 (5) of Regulation (EU)1303/2013, Ireland intends to retain the allocation for this measure at a national level and allow LAGs to apply for this funding on a project-by-project basis. This funding will be additional to their LDS allocation. This is to encourage activity under the measure and to ensure that projects are in line with the spirit of the LEADER ethos.

Description of the use of the LEADER start-up-kit referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 as specific type of preparatory support if relevant

Description of the system for ongoing application for LEADER co-operation projects referred to in Article 44(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The procedure and timetable to select the local development strategies

Justification for selection of geographical areas for local development strategy implementation whose population falls outside the limits laid down in Article 33(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Co-ordination with the other European Structural and Investment (hereafter "ESI") Funds as regards CLLD, including possible solution applied with regard to the use of the lead fund option, and any global complementarities between the ESI Funds in financing the preparatory support

Possibility or not of paying advances

Definition of the tasks of the Managing Authority, the paying agency and the LAGs under LEADER, in particular with regard to a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations referred to in Article 34(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Description of co-ordination mechanisms foreseen and complementarities ensured with operations supported under other rural development measures especially as regards: investments in non-agricultural activities and business start-up aid under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; investments under Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; and co-operation under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, in particular implementation of local development strategies by public-private partnerships

8.2.10.3.3. LEADER Preparatory Support

Sub-measure:

- 19.1 - Preparatory support

8.2.10.3.3.1. Description of the type of operation

LEADER is a community-led local development approach to the delivery of Rural Development Interventions. Such interventions will be delivered based on the design and implementation of tailored sub-regional development strategies that are based on identified needs at a sub-regional level. The regulatory framework provides for preparatory support which will be used to build the capacity of entities that express an interest in designing and implementing local development strategies.

8.2.10.3.3.2. Type of support

Grant aid to support the development of LDSs at sub-regional level.

8.2.10.3.3.3. Links to other legislation

Article 32-35 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (CPR).

8.2.10.3.3.4. Beneficiaries

Qualifying LAGs that have expressed an interest in the design and development of a LDS for a defined sub-regional area.

8.2.10.3.3.5. Eligible costs

(i) setting up of public-private partnerships; training actions for local actors; studies of the territory concerned; actions related to public relations regarding the local development activities.

(ii) training actions for local stakeholders; studies of the area concerned (including feasibility studies for some of the projects to be foreseen in the LDS); costs related to the design of the LDS, including consultancy costs and costs for actions related to consultations of stakeholders for the purposes of preparing the strategy; administrative costs (operating and personnel costs) of an organisation that applies for preparatory support during the preparation phase (future LAGs; existing LAGs, if any double funding is excluded).

8.2.10.3.3.6. Eligibility conditions

As outlined above, Ireland will conduct a two-stage process for LDS selection. The MA will facilitate a number of collective capacity-building actions open to all interested parties which will be eligible under the preparatory support element of the programme. In addition to this, the initial expression of interest process will ask potential LAGS to detail the preparatory resources they feel may be necessary to support the design and development of their LDS with a view to awarding a grant to successful LAGS to carry out this work. This process will be conducted in line with the regulatory requirements by a committee established as outlined in Article 33 (3) 1303/2013. The LAGs selected from Stage 1 will be awarded preparatory support to develop their LDS.

8.2.10.3.3.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Selection criteria for the initial step in the LDS selection process, which will identify those groups that are eligible for preparatory support, will focus on the coherence of the proposed LDS from a geographical and thematic perspective, the participative and representative nature of potential LAGs and the reasonableness of their vision for the development of their sub-regional area.

8.2.10.3.3.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

All preparatory support will be at a rate of 100%. A proportion of the preparatory support allocated will be used to support collective actions and capacity-building events for entities that express and interest in submitting a LEADER LDS.

Once LAGS have been chosen to design an LDS, Ireland will be using a system of Simplified Costs (Lump Sums) as outlined in Article 67 1303/2013 to allocate the remaining preparatory support budget. This system will see any successful LAG given a lump sum allocation in order to support them to design/develop a robust implementable LDS. This system will be fully elaborated prior to the LDS selection process and will be formulated based on Art 67 (5) 1303/2013. Further details in relation to the use of Simplified Cost Options will be confirmed with the Commission in advance of the launch of the LDS selection process.

8.2.10.3.3.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.10.3.3.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

This sub-measure of the LEADER measure does not contain any particularly high risk. The independent evaluation committee established to oversee the LDS selection process will monitor the process throughout. Grant aid will only be awarded on the basis of criteria outlined in the selection process and on the basis of vouched expenditure.

8.2.10.3.3.9.2. Mitigating actions

All expenditure will be subject to standard control procedures for correct financial management and audit compliance. This will be fully clarified with all LAGs interested in developing an LDS and they will be

fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to sound financial management before they embark on the LDS development process.

8.2.10.3.3.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.10.3.3.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Support will be calculated based on expenditure incurred and on the basis of the rules outlined in the regulatory framework (Article 65-71 1303/2013 (CPR)).

8.2.10.3.3.11. Information specific to the operation

Description of the obligatory community-led local development (hereafter "CLLD") elements of which the LEADER measure is composed: preparatory support, implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy, preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group (hereafter "LAG"), running costs and animation, referred to in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Description of the use of the LEADER start-up-kit referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 as specific type of preparatory support if relevant

Description of the system for ongoing application for LEADER co-operation projects referred to in Article 44(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

The procedure and timetable to select the local development strategies

Justification for selection of geographical areas for local development strategy implementation whose population falls outside the limits laid down in Article 33(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Co-ordination with the other European Structural and Investment (hereafter "ESI") Funds as regards CLLD, including possible solution applied with regard to the use of the lead fund option, and any global complementarities between the ESI Funds in financing the preparatory support

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Possibility or not of paying advances

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Definition of the tasks of the Managing Authority, the paying agency and the LAGs under LEADER, in particular with regard to a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations referred to in Article 34(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

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Description of co-ordination mechanisms foreseen and complementarities ensured with operations supported under other rural development measures especially as regards: investments in non-agricultural activities and business start-up aid under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; investments under Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; and co-operation under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, in particular implementation of local development strategies by public-private partnerships

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8.2.10.3.4. LEADER Running Costs and Animation

Sub-measure:

- 19.4 - Support for running costs and animation

8.2.10.3.4.1. Description of the type of operation

LEADER is a community-led local development approach to the delivery of Rural Development interventions. Such interventions will be delivered based on the design and implementation of tailored sub-regional LDS that are based on identified needs at a sub-regional level. This element of the LEADER measure relates to the operating costs of the LAGs charged with the design and implementation of the LDS.

8.2.10.3.4.2. Type of support

The support provided for running costs and animation will be in the form of grant aid.

8.2.10.3.4.3. Links to other legislation

Article 32-35 and 65-71 of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (CPR).

8.2.10.3.4.4. Beneficiaries

Local Action Groups.

8.2.10.3.4.5. Eligible costs

Running costs: Costs linked to the management of the implementation of the strategy consisting of operating costs, personnel costs, training costs, costs linked to communication, financial costs as well as the costs linked to monitoring and evaluation of the strategy as referred to in point (g) of Art. 34(3) CPR.

Animation: Costs of animation of the CLLD strategy in order to facilitate exchange between stakeholders, to provide information and to promote the strategy and to support potential beneficiaries to develop projects and prepare applications.

8.2.10.3.4.6. Eligibility conditions

Not applicable.

8.2.10.3.4.7. Principles with regards to the setting of selection criteria

Not applicable.

8.2.10.3.4.8. (Applicable) amounts and support rates

Support for running costs and animation shall not exceed 25% of the total public expenditure incurred within the LDS and will be supported at a rate of 100%. Ireland will be using a system of Simplified Costs as outlined in Article 67 1303/2013. This system will be fully elaborated prior to the LDS selection process and will be formulated based on what is outlined in Art 67(5) using primarily information regarding expenditure under the 2007-2013 programme. Further details in relation to the use of Simplified Cost Options will be confirmed with the Commission in advance of the launch of the LDS selection process.

Ireland will be making a concerted effort through seeking single LAGs in sub-regional areas to minimise expenditure related to running costs and animation and has an objective of achieving final running costs expenditure less than 25% where possible.

An advance of not more than 50% of the public support related to the running and animation costs may be made available to the LAGs. State guarantees will be provided in order to facilitate the availability of advances.

8.2.10.3.4.9. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.10.3.4.9.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

The bottom-up nature of the LEADER methodology requires robust and manageable systems for financial control and regulatory compliance. Implementation of the LEADER operations during the 2007-2013 programming period has identified a number of areas of risk and afforded a substantial learning process with regard to the types of systems required in order to mitigate this risk. The main risks centre on the financial capacity of LAGs and the need to ensure the sustainability of operations funded through the RDP by ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework particularly as it pertains to sound financial management.

As outlined Ireland is proposing some changes to the delivery mechanisms for LEADER in the 2014-2020 period that will address directly the financial capacity of LAGs and improve the capacity of the system as a whole to address issues of regulatory and financial compliance. This will include the management of Article 28 Administrative Checks by a public authority either inside or outside the LAG or other State appointed body as appropriate.

8.2.10.3.4.9.2. Mitigating actions

All expenditure will be subject to standard control procedures for correct financial management and audit

compliance. This will be fully clarified to all LAGs selected to deliver an LDS and they will be fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to sound financial management before they embark on the LDS implementation process.

8.2.10.3.4.9.3. Overall assessment of the measure

The relevant risks associated with this measure have been identified and addressed as part of the measure design.

8.2.10.3.4.10. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

Support for running costs and animation shall not exceed 25% of the total public expenditure incurred within the LDS.

8.2.10.3.4.11. Information specific to the operation

Description of the obligatory community-led local development (hereafter "CLLD") elements of which the LEADER measure is composed: preparatory support, implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy, preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group (hereafter "LAG"), running costs and animation, referred to in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Not applicable.

Description of the use of the LEADER start-up-kit referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 as specific type of preparatory support if relevant

Description of the system for ongoing application for LEADER co-operation projects referred to in Article 44(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

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Justification for selection of geographical areas for local development strategy implementation whose population falls outside the limits laid down in Article 33(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Co-ordination with the other European Structural and Investment (hereafter "ESI") Funds as regards CLLD, including possible solution applied with regard to the use of the lead fund option, and any global complementarities between the ESI Funds in financing the preparatory support

Possibility or not of paying advances

Definition of the tasks of the Managing Authority, the paying agency and the LAGs under LEADER, in particular with regard to a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations referred to in Article 34(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Description of co-ordination mechanisms foreseen and complementarities ensured with operations supported under other rural development measures especially as regards: investments in non-agricultural activities and business start-up aid under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; investments under Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; and co-operation under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, in particular implementation of local development strategies by public-private partnerships

8.2.10.4. Verifiability and controllability of the measures and/or types of operations

8.2.10.4.1. Risk(s) in the implementation of the measures

As referenced above.

8.2.10.4.2. Mitigating actions

As referenced above.

8.2.10.4.3. Overall assessment of the measure

As referenced above.

8.2.10.5. Methodology for calculation of the amount or support rate, where relevant

As referenced above.

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8.2.10.6. *Information specific to the measure*

Description of the obligatory community-led local development (hereafter "CLLD") elements of which the LEADER measure is composed: preparatory support, implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy, preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group (hereafter "LAG"), running costs and animation, referred to in Article 35(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

As referenced above.

Description of the use of the LEADER start-up-kit referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 as specific type of preparatory support if relevant

As referenced above.

Description of the system for ongoing application for LEADER co-operation projects referred to in Article 44(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

As referenced above.

The procedure and timetable to select the local development strategies

As referenced above.

Justification for selection of geographical areas for local development strategy implementation whose population falls outside the limits laid down in Article 33(6) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

As referenced above.

Co-ordination with the other European Structural and Investment (hereafter "ESI") Funds as regards CLLD, including possible solution applied with regard to the use of the lead fund option, and any global complementarities between the ESI Funds in financing the preparatory support

As referenced above.

Possibility or not of paying advances

As referenced above.

Definition of the tasks of the Managing Authority, the paying agency and the LAGs under LEADER, in particular with regard to a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations referred to in Article 34(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

As referenced above.

Description of co-ordination mechanisms foreseen and complementarities ensured with operations supported under other rural development measures especially as regards: investments in non-agricultural activities and business start-up aid under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; investments under Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013; and co-operation under Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, in particular implementation of local development strategies by public-private partnerships

As referenced above.

8.2.10.7. Other important remarks relevant to understand and implement the measure

n/a

9. EVALUATION PLAN

9.1. Objectives and purpose

A statement of the objectives and purpose of the evaluation plan, based on ensuring that sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities are undertaken, in particular to provide information needed for programme steering, for the annual implementation reports in 2017 and 2019 and the ex-post evaluation, and to ensure that data needed for RDP evaluation are available.

In overall terms, the purpose of this Evaluation Plan is to help to ensure the effective expenditure of EU and national exchequer funding on Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP) over the period 2014-2020, and in doing so, to ensure that the RDP contributes to the achievement of CAP objectives, the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and national policy aims.

The achievement of maximum value for money is particularly important at a time of scarce financial resources. The formulation of an Evaluation Plan is an integral part of programme development and will help to identify, in advance, the key information and resources required to ensure effective implementation and, in turn, help to ensure the achievement of EU and national objectives in the most cost effective way possible.

In more detail, the objectives of this Evaluation Plan are to:

- clearly set out the arrangements necessary to carry out effective monitoring and evaluation of Ireland's RDP activities, in accordance with the detailed requirements set out by the European Commission,
- outline how sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities will be undertaken,
- outline how the commensurate resources will be assigned to these activities, and
- demonstrate how the evaluation activities undertaken will ensure the availability of the information at the time and in the format required to effectively manage and monitor the progress of the programme.

It is expected that the formulation of this Evaluation Plan will also give rise to beneficial effects in areas such as:

- the supporting of a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation process,
- the generation of added value in a policy-making context through the incorporation of evaluation into RDP implementation from the outset, which will help to provide ongoing, valuable information on the performance of the programme and facilitate more meaningful review.

Finally, it is intended that the rigorous and systematic approach to be taken to evaluation under the RDP over the 2014-2020 period, and particularly the planning of evaluation activities at the early stages of policy design and implementation, will generate legacy benefits for the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

9.2. Governance and coordination

Brief description of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the RDP, identifying the main bodies involved and their responsibilities. Explanation of how evaluation activities are linked with RDP implementation in terms of content and timing.

DAFM is Ireland's RDP Managing Authority and Paying Agency, and will have primary responsibility for the implementation of Ireland's RDP monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), as the delegated Paying Agency for LEADER, will have primary responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the LEADER elements of the RDP, and will consult with DAFM on progress in relation to same on an ongoing basis. The monitoring and evaluation of LEADER will, however, be integrated with the overall monitoring and evaluation for the RDP.

As set out in the Rural Development and Common Provisions Regulations, the Monitoring Committee will have a role in relation to the monitoring of the performance of the RDP. The Committee's functions in this regard are set out in the Regulation, and include the consideration and approval of annual implementation reports and the reviewing the implementation of the RDP and progress made towards achieving its objectives.

Within DAFM, in general terms, a number of line divisions will be responsible for different aspects of the RDP monitoring and evaluation arrangements. These are:

- Rural Development Division:
- will be the central coordinating division for the monitoring and evaluation of the RDP,
 - will coordinate the measure design input from line divisions,
 - will coordinate the process of the identification, capture, and management of the appropriate amount of data required for efficient monitoring and evaluation at the earliest possible juncture by line divisions, i.e. during application processing,
 - will identify, with the assistance of line divisions, the data requirements that are likely to be satisfied using external sources of information,
 - will engage external technical assistance to assist with evaluations as required, including through the compilation of the more qualitative data associated with the enhanced Annual Implementation Reports
 - will coordinate the RDP input into the overall CAP evaluation to be undertaken in conjunction with Pillar 1 schemes.
- Line divisions (for example, Agri-Environment and Structures, Nitrates Bio-diversity and Engineering Division, Climate Change and Bio-Energy Division etc):
 - will ensure that the requirements in relation to statistical information and monitoring and evaluation data are addressed to the maximum possible extent during the design of individual measures, including where this involves consultation with/implementation by external bodies,
 - will implement systems of collection and reporting of monitoring and evaluation data over the RDP period.

- IMT (Information Management and Technology) Division:
 - will be responsible for the development of the IMT systems necessary to support the implementation of the RDP,
 - will ensure the capture and interrogation of statistical information and monitoring and evaluation data from both internal (DAFM) and external sources, including data that may be obtained by alternative means such as surveys.
- Economics and Planning Division (EPD):
 - as DAFM's central evaluation unit, this division will contribute to the optimum design and targeting of measures under the new RDP,
 - will continue to incorporate RDP measures into DAFM's Value For Money Review process, as has been done under the 2007-2013 RDP,
 - will incorporate RDP measures into plans to undertake Focused Policy Assessments in line with the Public Spending Code published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform,
 - as a member of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service, will provide ongoing expert advice and input into evaluation issues that arise over the lifetime of the RDP.
 - As a member of the Public Service Evaluation Network, EPD will feed back learning from the wider public sector evaluation context into the RDP monitoring and evaluation process.

In addition, a new DAFM Business Co-ordinator, who will plan and monitor the implementation of CAP reform across Pillar 1 and Pillar 2, will help to coordinate the activities of these divisions in the implementation of the RDP monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

RDP Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group

The critical need for effective evaluation of the expenditure of Rural Development funds, and the comprehensive nature of the evaluation requirements set out by the Rural Development Regulation, requires a specific focus on the part of DAFM. For example, in addition to the challenge of ensuring that data is captured as part of measure design, there is also the considerable challenge of ensuring that IMT systems are able to manage and interrogate this data efficiently, regardless of whether it comes from internal or external sources.

As part of the process of designing the RDP, a Coordinating Committee has been put in place to ensure a common approach among all divisions inputting in the process. This Committee will remain in place following the formal agreement of the RDP and will then focus on ensuring a coordinated approach to the implementation of the RDP. Given the central importance of monitoring and evaluation in the RDP, a sub group of this Coordinating Committee will be focused on monitoring and evaluation requirements. This sub group will be comprised of:

- Rural Development Division
- Finance Division
- IMT Division (Direct Payments Section)
- Economics and Planning Division
- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

- Agri-Environment and Structures & Nitrates Bio-diversity and Engineering Division (given the focus in the RDP on environmental issues)
- It is expected that the input of other actors may be required in relation to specific issues as they arise. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of the Locally Led Agri-Environment Schemes may require input from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

This sub group will feed back into the main coordinating Committee and ensure that monitoring and evaluation issues remain at the centre of the implementation process and are dealt with in a systematic manner.

The Department's evaluation activities will be augmented by the engagement of external evaluation assistance on tasks such as the measurement of progress against result indicators and the preparation of the enhanced Annual Implementation Reports in 2017 and 2019, and will be reviewed by the Monitoring Committee as required under the Rural Development Regulation. In all cases, the work of such evaluators will be overseen by steering committees comprised of representatives from relevant line divisions.

9.3. Evaluation topics and activities

Indicative description of evaluation topics and activities anticipated, including, but not limited to, fulfilment of evaluation requirements provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. It shall cover: (a) activities needed to evaluate the contribution of each RDP Union priority as referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 to the rural development objectives laid down in Article 4 of that Regulation, assessment of result and impact indicator values, analysis of net effects, thematic issues, including sub-programmes, cross-cutting issues, national rural network, contribution of CLLD strategies; (b) planned support for evaluation at LAG level; (c) programme specific elements such as work needed to develop methodologies or to address specific policy areas.

The evaluation topics to be covered by DAFM's monitoring and evaluation arrangements reflect the need for the RDP to address both EU and national requirements. From an EU perspective, this means ensuring that the three objectives for rural development are pursued through an effective targeting of RDP measures at the Union priorities set out in the Rural Development Regulation. From a national perspective, the evaluation topics will focus on the way in which RDP implementation is consistent with the programme's intervention logic, is coherent with the overarching policy context and delivers best value for money. The set of measures contained in this RDP have been designed as an integrated response to this range of policy prerogatives.

Evaluation activities will be planned across what is essentially a two-step process. The first step is the preparation phase, during which DAFM has set the basis for the evaluation that will take place over the RDP programming period. Work undertaken here includes linkage of common evaluation questions and indicators to focus areas and measures, identification of data needs and sources, and the areas in which external evaluators or other technical assistance will be required. This step has been integrated into the RDP design process.

The second step is the programme implementation phase, during which substantive evaluation will be carried out. Work to be undertaken here will include ongoing assessment of progress towards the achievement stated objectives, via the submission of Annual and Enhanced Annual Implementation Reports and other evaluative activities.

Evaluation Topics

The following evaluation topics have been undertaken as part of the RDP design and associated ex ante evaluation:

- an assessment of whether the range of RDP measures are adequately addressing the Rural Development Priorities and their associated focus areas
- an assessment of the contribution of RDP measures to the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment, and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and
- an assessment of the extent to which effective complementarity with Pillar I of the CAP and with other ESI funds is being achieved.

Further evaluation topics will also focus on the extent to which the RDP is contributing to the achievement stated EU and national objectives. The focus here will be on addressing the key issue of whether the expenditure undertaken as part of the RDP is achieving value for money. This work will be ongoing over the course of the RDP, and will involve the monitoring and evaluation requirements set out in the Rural Development Regulation as well as DAFMs own evaluative work via Value for Money Reviews, Focused Policy Assessments etc.

A number of specific initiatives are of relevance here, including

- A programme of Value for Money and Policy Reviews is in place across Government Departments. The objectives of this programme of reviews are to analyse spending in a systematic manner and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions can be made within and between programmes. It is one of a wide range of modernisation initiatives aimed at moving public sector management away from the traditional focus on inputs to concentrate on the achievement of results. The Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative was introduced in 2006 as the successor to the 1997 Expenditure Review Initiative. The Programme is organised in cycles with the most recent cycle being agreed by Government for the period 2012-2014. Previous cycles have included reviews of RDP schemes, including the Less Favoured Areas Scheme, the Organic Farming Scheme, the Young Farmers Installation Scheme, and the Early Retirement Scheme. The structure for the next cycle of reviews is currently being finalised. However, it is intended that it will incorporate a focus on the RDP. In particular, it is intended that any reviews of RDP supports will include a focus both on the 'national scheme perspective' and the contribution to Rural Development Priorities, Objectives etc as set out in the Rural Development Regulation.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group is examining possible approaches to undertaking a baseline evaluation of Agri-Environment and Climate Change Measures in the RDP. Specifically, this will be aimed at providing clear data to underlie an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness

of GLAS, and will incorporate data requirements linked evaluation requirements set out in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014.

- The Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group has also been involved in ensuring that a coherent system is in place for the identification of performance indicators and evaluative data. The Managing Authority has been in ongoing contact with implementing division during measure design to ensure that data required to fulfil monitoring and evaluation requirements are in place. In addition, implementing divisions are developing additional indicators outside of those required by relevant regulations. These additional indicators will be assessed by the Steering Group to ensure that they provide a coherent basis to monitor and evaluate measures in relation to Rural Development Priorities and Objectives as set out in the Rural Development Regulation. A specific example of this approach is the Beef Data and Genomics Programme in Measure 10. Monitoring and evaluation data requirements have been integrated into scheme design and as a result there will be ongoing monitoring of the Green House Gas reduction benefits from the scheme, on an annual basis, using the detailed database to be developed from the information collected as part of the Programme. This will incorporate the recording and reporting of a range of indicators related to the various actions under the Programme such as the numbers of animals recording each of the data elements (e.g. calf size, calf vigour, calf health, bull/cow culling reasons), number of animals genotyped, number of carbon navigators completed, number of reports issued to farmers and level of replacement 4/5 star animals on herds. In addition, the result/impact of the scheme in delivering lower GHG emissions through the delivery of a more carbon efficient national beef herd will be considered via measurement of indicators in areas such as calving interval, the change in the percentage of cows/heifers calving in 3 months, change in the percentage of replacements calved at 22-26 months, change in the length of grazing season etc. These metrics will be supplemented with an evaluation of the genetic gain at herd and animal level, which can be used to further validate the quantification of the improved carbon efficiency of the national herd. It is intended that the BDGP will also be the subject of an independent focused mid-term evaluation (year 3 of the intervention) as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. This will incorporate an examination of the effects of the scheme with a particular focus on evaluating whether the scheme has led to unintended environmental side-effects or unsustainable intensification. The evaluation will also incorporate an examination of any animal husbandry effects related to the scheme and examine the possibility of recalculating premia via a programme modification should this prove necessary. DAFM's Economics and Planning Division will provide expert input into this study drawing on their experience in scheme evaluation in DAFM. This evaluation will build on the ongoing data collection and analysis which has been integrated into scheme design.
- Arrangements are being put in place to develop a programme of substantive case studies to underpin the evaluation of LEADER interventions.

Evaluation Activities

The first tranche of evaluation activities has been undertaken during the preparation phase. DAFM has engaged with its ex-ante evaluators in order to establish a robust evaluation plan and an efficient structure to support the plan's implementation. Activities here include:

- early identification of the data requirements for the assessment of progress against output, result and other indicators,
- early identification of the anticipated sources of data and the means by which data gaps will be

addressed,

- an early assessment of the linkages between common evaluation questions and common indicators (given the particular requirements of the enhanced AIRs in 2017 and 2019).,
- identifying possible areas which may require the engagement of external evaluators and the use of technical assistance at key stages of RDP implementation.

The second tranche of evaluation activities will be those associated with programme implementation. It is in this phase that the contribution of the various measures towards stated objectives will be evaluated. Key activities during this phase will include:

- the adoption of suitable evaluation methodologies and the application of these to the assessment of the achievement of value for money in RDP spending,
- planning and execution of AIRs, and enhanced AIRs, in accordance with Commission requirements.

9.4. Data and information

Brief description of the system to record, maintain, manage and report statistical information on RDP implementation and provision of monitoring data for evaluation. Identification of data sources to be used, data gaps, potential institutional issues related to data provision, and proposed solutions. This section should demonstrate that appropriate data management systems will be operational in due time.

The provision of efficient data management systems to record, maintain, manage and report statistical information on the RDP, and to provide monitoring data for evaluation purposes, requires action at four levels:

- identification and capture of the appropriate statistical and monitoring data at the earliest opportunity, i.e. during measure design and implementation (application processing, control and payment processing),
- enhancement/re-design of existing internal IT systems to enable processing of measure-based statistical and monitoring data - including through compatibility and/or efficient communication with external sources of information in the case of some measures and indicators,
- identification of other potential methods to collect statistical and monitoring data in accordance with evaluation requirements and
- the efficient incorporation of these additional methods/sources into DAFM's data management systems.

Each of these activities will also be informed by the range of requirements in relation to:

- the recording of context indicators,
- the measurement of outputs and results in accordance with the range of other indicators detailed in the Implementing Act (output, result and target indicators),
- the linkage of indicators to focus areas and measures as set out in the Indicator Plan,
- Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), including in relation to outputs, progress towards targets and achievement of the Performance Framework indicators,
- the focus area-related common evaluation questions that will be addressed in the enhanced AIRs in

2017 and 2019.

At this stage, it is envisaged that DAFM's overall data management system for statistical information and monitoring data is likely to be comprised of three elements:

- capture and processing of application/measure data, including monitoring data (in respect of output indicators, and some result and Performance Framework indicators, as required in particular for the completion of AIRs) through existing, internal IT systems and data sources, primarily:
 - the Generic Claims Processing System (GCPS) and the Ranking and Selection System (RASS), which will process application data,
 - the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) and the (Agriculture Field Inspection and Testing (AFIT) system, which will facilitate control and inspection, and
 - the SAP financial system

- capture and processing of application/measure data, including monitoring and evaluation data from external sources, including:
 - Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
 - Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
 - Teagasc
 - The Environmental Protection Agency
 - Bord Bia
 - agricultural planners and advisors,
 - EIP Operational Groups
 - ICBF
 - Central Statistics Office,
 - National Biodiversity Centre

and

- capture of other, more qualitative, monitoring data (primarily in respect of the common evaluation questions to be addressed in the enhanced AIRs in 2017 and 2019) through alternative means or from other external sources, such as may be provided via the use of external expertise.

While much of the statistical and monitoring data will be generated internally in DAFM via the systems established to support the implementation of individual measures, there will also be a need to link to a number of external sources of data. In addition, a range of additional indicator and monitoring data will have to be generated, stored and reported upon given the requirements in relation to the drafting of an Indicator Plan, and the compilation of the AIRs and enhanced AIRs. Further needs in this area are likely to arise depending on whether evaluation topics and activities anticipated by DAFM change over time.

The satisfaction of all of these requirements - in addition to requiring a particular focus from Line Divisions during measure design - has led to the establishment of a separate evaluation project within DAFM's IMT Division in relation to the RDP. At the time of writing, the project is at the early stages of requirements gathering in conjunction with the Managing Authority. The project envisages that, rather than building a generic warehouse using a C.O.T.S. (Commercial off the shelf) data warehouse tool, the best approach is to extract and store the identified data from all the operational systems in a central integrated data repository where the RDP Evaluation and Monitoring Business Unit will be able to run the relevant reports

using a combination of IMT Division developed reports and user generated reports using an end-user reporting tool.

In addressing issues relating to monitoring and evaluation, and data requirements in particular, the Department has been particularly cognisant of the need to take into account the experience gained in monitoring and evaluation in previous programming period. Thus, a number of issues have been specifically addressed in the RDP design process and in the formulation of this evaluation plan, including

- the clear identification of responsibilities in divisions across the department and the identification of the required resources to support monitoring and evaluation
- the need to put in place an efficient and coordinated approach to the collation of data for reporting requirements across the department, and
- the benefits to be derived from designing at an early stage of RDP design a common electronic system for identification and recording required data.

9.5. Timeline

Major milestones of the programming period, and indicative outline of the timing needed to ensure that results are available at the appropriate time.

The table below outlines the major evaluation milestones over the programming period. It is intended that as many as possible of the data requirements and indicators will be satisfied/agreed, and the development of the IMT data management systems will be complete, in advance of programme commencement.

1. Commencement of RDP

Draft RDP submitted Q2 2014 - Schemes coming on line following negotiation with Commission.

2. First Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2016 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2016 - Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-5, and paragraph 10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014.

3. First Enhanced Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2017 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2017. Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014, including:

- an assessment of the achievement of the performance framework indicators,
- actions taken to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities, and
- additional 'Enhanced AIR' reporting requirements, especially assessment of complementary result indicators and common evaluation questions.

4. Third Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2018 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2018 - Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-5, and paragraph 10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014, including:

- an assessment of the achievement of the performance framework indicators, and
- actions taken to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities.

5. Second Enhanced Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2019 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2019 - Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014, including:

- an assessment of the achievement of the performance framework indicators, and
- additional 'Enhanced AIR' reporting requirements, especially assessment of complementary result indicators and common evaluation questions, and
- an assessment of the progress made in ensuring an integrated approach to the use of EAFRD and other EU funds.

6. Fifth Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2020 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2020 - Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-5, and paragraph 10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014, including:

- an assessment of the achievement of the performance framework indicators.

7. Sixth Annual Implementation Report

Submission 30 June 2021 - Work on collation etc commencing March 2021 - Information as set out in Annex VII, paragraphs 1-5, and paragraph 10, of Commission Working Document of 19.02.2014, including:

- assessment of achievement of the performance framework indicators.

8. Ex-post Evaluation Report

Submission 31 December 2024 - Information demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of RDP measures over the period from 2014, and their contribution to EU common policy and programme-specific objectives.

9.6. Communication

Description of how evaluation findings will be disseminated to target recipients, including a description of the mechanisms established to follow-up on the use of evaluation results.

Evaluation findings will be disseminated to a range of recipients on an ongoing basis. The subgroup of the RDP Coordination Committee will oversee this process.

From an outward-looking perspective, it is intended that communication and follow-up activities will mainly revolve around the submission of the Annual Implementation Reports (including enhanced reports)

to the European Commission and the Monitoring Committee.

From an internal perspective, the subgroup of the RDP Coordination Committee will facilitate discussion and application of monitoring and evaluation results across the range of measures in the RDP. Again, this is likely to revolve around the production, submission and follow-up of the AIRs, but may also take place as a result of other evaluations carried out.

More generally, it is intended that the Annual Implementation Reports, and any other evaluations conducted by, for example, DAFM's Economics and Planning Division, will be published as they become available. In addition, it is intended to make use of other fora such as the National Rural Network and the Public Sector Evaluation Network as possible further channels of communication.

The Department's Annual Report is a further communication channel which can be used to report on progress across RDP schemes to a wide audience.

9.7. Resources

Description of the resources needed and foreseen to implement the plan, including an indication of administrative capacity, data, financial resources, IT needs. Description of capacity building activities foreseen to ensure that the evaluation plan can be fully implemented.

The successful implementation of this Evaluation Plan depends upon the allocation of sufficient administrative, financial and technological resources to the various activities outlined, and at the appropriate times. For example, the availability of sufficient resources is likely to be a more critical issue for DAFM's Line Divisions and IMT Division in the early stages of RDP development, which focus on measure design and the establishment of data management systems, than when the programme is in operational mode. Similarly, and although adequate resources are required to coordinate the early evaluation planning activities, it is likely that significant, adequately trained resources will be required by DAFM's Rural Development Division during programme implementation, given that this Division will have overall responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the RDP on an ongoing basis.

The following is an initial description of the resources needed and foreseen in this regard:

Measure Design

Line Divisions - at least one staff member with clearly assigned responsibility for evaluation/indicator setting under each proposed measure. The relevant line divisions are those identified by the Department's senior management as the lead divisions in relation to the design of individual measures. Thus, this is a clear assignation of responsibility for each measure.

Rural Development Division - at least one staff member assigned to coordinate input from Line Divisions in relation to evaluation data identification and capture, and to ensure the establishment of the appropriate linkages between measures and focus areas and the range of common output, result and target indicators.

IMT Division – at least one additional staff member and one or more external contractors will be required to support the provision of a data analytics system specifically for the RDP (and Pillar 1 Schemes).

The design and construction of a RDP Data Analytics service to support evaluation reporting is envisaged. This service will also address cross cutting operational reporting as required,

Economics and Planning Division - at least one staff member with responsibility for assisting Rural Development Division in the establishment of the RDP evaluation and monitoring arrangements, and in the coordination of RDP evaluation activities with other evaluation activities likely to be undertaken by EPD over the period of the programme. These evaluative activities will be in addition to those required under the relevant EU Regulations.

Programme Implementation

Line Divisions – one staff member responsible for coordinating the response to issues arising from, for example, Annual Implementation Reports.

Rural Development Division – at least one staff member with responsibility for monitoring progress, managing the production of Annual Implementation Reports and coordinating any necessary follow-up.

IMT Division - technical and administrative resources will be available as necessary to ensure efficient processing of RDP measure data and generation of the information required to fulfil evaluation requirements.

Economics and Planning Division - ongoing availability of advice and assistance in the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements, and to ensure complementarity with the existing RDP evaluation activities of EPD.

Financial Resources

The implementation of the RDP Data Analytics system for evaluation reporting will entail financial burden over and above the systems to support the operation of the schemes. There will be costs involved in the provision of the necessary hardware (possibly), software (data collection/storage and data analytics reporting) and development/support. This expense may be partially recoverable from the technical assistance budget.

10. FINANCING PLAN

10.1. Annual EAFRD contributions in (€)

Types of regions and additional allocations	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	0.00	379,633,941.00	469,542,442.00	312,874,411.00	312,779,690.00	312,669,355.00	312,485,314.00	2,099,985,153.00
Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	0.00	0.00	182,000.00	133,000.00	112,000.00	95,000.00	85,000.00	607,000.00
Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed	0.00	90,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	90,000,000.00
Total	0.00	469,633,941.00	469,724,442.00	313,007,411.00	312,891,690.00	312,764,355.00	312,570,314.00	2,190,592,153.00

(Out of which) Performance reserve article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013	0.00	28,178,036.46	28,172,546.52	18,772,464.66	18,766,781.40	18,760,161.30	18,749,118.84	131,399,109.18
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Total indicative amount of support envisaged for climate change objectives							1,908,979,153.00
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10.2. Single EAFRD contribution rate for all measures broken down by type of region as referred to in Article 59(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Article establishing the maximum contribution rate.	Applicable EAFRD Contribution Rate	Min applicable EAFRD cont. rate 2014-2020 (%)	Max applicable EAFRD cont. rate 2014-2020 (%)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	53%	20%	53%

10.3. Breakdown by measure or type of operation with a specific EAFRD contribution rate (in € total period 2014-2020)

10.3.1. M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					13,250,000.00 (2A) 13,250,000.00 (3B) 20,723,000.00 (5D) 19,610,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Measures referred to in Articles 14, 27 and 35, for the LEADER local development referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and for operations under Article 19(1)(a)(i)	20%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No	100%					0.00 (2A)

	1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed						0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)	
Total							0.00	66,833,000.00

10.3.2. M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					265,000.00 (2A) 2,573,000.00 (3B) 265,000.00 (5D) 530,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (2A) 607,000.00 (3B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed	100%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
Total						0.00	4,240,000.00

10.3.3. M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					82,310,000.00 (2A) 63,600,000.00 (2B) 13,250,000.00 (3B) 10,600,000.00 (5B) 2,120,000.00 (5D) 52,470,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation under Article 17, points (a) and (b) of Article 21(1), Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34	56%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (2B) 0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (2B) 0.00 (3B) 0.00 (5B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)

	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed	100%					0.00 (2A)
							0.00 (2B)
							0.00 (3B)
							0.00 (5B)
							0.00 (5D)
							1,700,000.00 (P4)
Total						0.00	226,050,000.00

Total Union contribution reserved for operations falling within the scope of (EU) No 1305/2013 Article 59(6)	66,890,000.00
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10.3.4. M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					3,180,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed	100%					0.00 (P4)
Total						0.00	3,180,000.00

10.3.5. M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					0.00 (5D) 0.00 (5E) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation under Article 17, points (a) and (b) of Article 21(1), Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34	56%					167,770,000.00 (5D) 41,890,000.00 (5E) 637,329,153.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (5D) 0.00 (5E) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014	100%					0.00 (5D) 0.00 (5E) 72,500,000.00 (P4)

	or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed							
Total							0.00	919,489,153.00

10.3.6. M11 - Organic farming (art 29)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					29,680,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation under Article 17, points (a) and (b) of Article 21(1), Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34	56%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be	100%					0.00 (P4)

	reassessed							
Total							0.00	29,680,000.00

10.3.7. M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					30,450,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation under Article 17, points (a) and (b) of Article 21(1), Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34	56%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be	100%					15,800,000.00 (P4)

	reassessed							
Total							0.00	46,250,000.00

Total Union contribution reserved for operations falling within the scope of (EU) No 1305/2013 Article 59(6)							0.00
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10.3.8. M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					726,100,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation under Article 17, points (a) and (b) of Article 21(1), Articles 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34	56%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be	100%					0.00 (P4)

	reassessed							
Total							0.00	726,100,000.00

10.3.9. M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					927,500.00 (2A) 1,192,500.00 (2B) 530,000.00 (5D) 1,060,000.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Measures referred to in Articles 14, 27 and 35, for the LEADER local development referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and for operations under Article 19(1)(a)(i)	20%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (2B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (2B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial	100%					0.00 (2A) 0.00 (2B) 0.00 (5D) 0.00 (P4)

	assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed						
Total						0.00	3,710,000.00

10.3.10. M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					0.00 (6B)
	Article 59(4)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Measures referred to in Articles 14, 27 and 35, for the LEADER local development referred to in Article 32 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and for operations under Article 19(1)(a)(i)	63%					157,000,000.00 (6B)
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00 (6B)
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be	100%					0.00 (6B)

	reassessed							
Total							0.00	157,000,000.00

10.3.11. M20 - Technical assistance Member States (art 51-54)

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Article 59(3)(d) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Other regions	Main	53%					3,180,000.00
	Article 59(4)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Operations receiving funding from funds transferred to the EAFRD in application of Article 7(2) and Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013	53%					0.00
	Article 59(4)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 - Additional allocation for Portugal and Cyprus on condition that those Member States are receiving financial assistance in accordance with articles 136 and 143 TFEU on 1 January 2014 or thereafter, until 2016, when the application of this provision shall be reassessed	100%					0.00
Total						0.00	3,180,000.00

10.3.12. M113 - Early retirement

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Discontinued measures - Discontinued Measure	Main	53%					4,880,000.00
Total						0.00	4,880,000.00

10.3.13. M131 - Meeting standards based on Community legislation

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Discontinued measures - Discontinued Measure	Main	53%					0.00
Total						0.00	0.00

10.3.14. M341 - Skills acquisition, animation and implementation

Types of regions and additional allocations		Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate 2014-2020 (%)	Applicable EAFRD Contribution rate with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instruments under MA responsibility 2014-2020 (%)	Rate applicable to financial instrument under MA responsibility with art 59(4)(g) 2014-2020 (%)	Financial Instruments Indicative EAFRD amount 2014-2020 (€)	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
Discontinued measures - Discontinued Measure	Main	53%					0.00
Total						0.00	0.00

10.4. Indicative breakdown by measure for each sub-programme

Thematic sub-programme name	Measure	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (EUR)
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11. INDICATOR PLAN

11.1. Indicator Plan

11.1.1. P1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

11.1.1.1. 1A) Fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T1: percentage of expenditure under Articles 14, 15 and 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 in relation to the total expenditure for the RDP (focus area 1A)	3.60
Total RDP planned public expenditures	3,924,700,000.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	126,100,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	8,000,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	7,000,000.00

11.1.1.2. 1B) Strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T2: Total number of cooperation operations supported under the cooperation measure (Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013) (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (focus area 1B)	1,210.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Nr of EIP operational groups to be supported (establishment and operation) (16.1)	10.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Nr of other cooperation operations (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...) (16.2 to 16.9)	1,200.00

11.1.1.3. 1C) Fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T3: Total number of participants trained under Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 (focus area 1C)	111,600.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	111,600.00

11.1.2. P2: Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests

11.1.2.1. 2A) *Improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification*

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T4: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	9.11
Number of agricultural holdings with RDP support for investments in restructuring or modernisation (focus area 2A)	12,750.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
17 Agricultural holdings (farms) - total	139,890.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	6,650.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Total public for training/skills	25,000,000.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	25,000,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	375.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	500,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (4.1)	12,750.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure for investments in infrastructure (4.3)	0.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	355,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure € (4.1)	142,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	142,000,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	1,750,000.00

11.1.2.2. 2B) Facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T5: percentage of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)	2.86
Number of agriculture holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investments for young farmers (focus area 2B)	4,000.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
17 Agricultural holdings (farms) - total	139,890.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (support to the business plan of young farmers) (4.1)	4,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	200,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	120,000,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	2,250,000.00

11.1.3. P3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture

11.1.3.1. 3A) Improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and inter-branch organisations

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.3.2. 3B) Supporting farm risk prevention and management

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T7: percentage of farms participating in risk management schemes (focus area 3B)	0
Number of agricultural holdings participating in risk management scheme (focus area 3B)	0

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
17 Agricultural holdings (farms) - total	139,890.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	6,650.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Total public for training/skills	25,000,000.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	25,000,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	10,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	6,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	62,500,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	25,000,000.00

11.1.4. P4: Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry

Agriculture

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	56,650.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Total public for training/skills	37,000,000.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	37,000,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	750.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	1,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Nr of operations of support for non productive investment (4.4)	9,700.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	210,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	114,000,000.00
M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)	Nr of operations supported for drawing up of village development and N2000/HNV area management plans (7.1)	0.00
M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)	Total public expenditure (€)	6,000,000.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate (10.1)	1,245,809.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Public expenditure for genetic resources conservation (10.2)	0.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Total public expenditure (€)	1,213,750,630.00
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)	Area (ha) - conversion to organic farming (11.1)	16,000.00
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)	Area (ha) - maintenance of organic farming (11.2)	46,880.00
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)	Total public expenditure (€)	56,000,000.00
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)	Area (ha) - NATURA 2000 AG land (12.1)	186,000.00
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)	Area (ha) - WFD (12.3)	0.00
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)	Total public expenditure (€)	73,250,000.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	Area (ha) - mountain areas (13.1)	0.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	Area (ha) - other areas with significant NC (13.2)	3,402,000.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	Area (ha) - areas with specific constraints (13.3)	15,000.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	Total public expenditure (€)	1,370,000,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	2,000,000.00

Forest

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.4.1. 4A) Restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes

Agriculture

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T9: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (focus area 4A)	20.77
Agricultural land under management contracts supporting biodiversity and/or landscapes (ha) (focus area 4A)	1,036,689.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
18 Agricultural Area - total UAA	4,991,350.00

Forest

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.4.2. 4B) Improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management

Agriculture

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T10: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (focus area 4B)	20.91
Agricultural land under management contracts to improve water management (ha) (focus area 4B)	1,043,790.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
18 Agricultural Area - total UAA	4,991,350.00

Forest

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.4.3. 4C) Preventing soil erosion and improving soil management

Agriculture

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T12: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (focus area 4C)	18.08
Agricultural land under management contracts to improve soil management and/or prevent soil erosion (ha) (focus area 4C)	902,188.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value

18 Agricultural Area - total UAA	4,991,350.00
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Forest

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.5. P5: Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors

11.1.5.1. 5A) Increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.5.2. 5B) Increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T15: Total investment for energy efficiency (€) (focus area 5B)	50,000,000.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Nr of operations supported for investment (in agricultural holdings, in processing and marketing of ag. products) (4.1, 4.2 and 4.3)	400.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	50,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	20,000,000.00

11.1.5.3. 5C) Facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by products, wastes, residues and other non food raw material for the purposes of the bio-economy

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.5.4. 5D) Reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	11,500.00
T17: percentage of LU concerned by investments in live-stock management in view of reducing GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	0.20
T18: percentage of agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHG and/or ammonia emissions (focus area 5D)	10.79
Agricultural land under management contracts targeting reduction of GHG and/or ammonia emissions (ha) (focus area 5D)	538,490.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
21 Livestock units - total	5,787,400.00
18 Agricultural Area - total UAA	4,991,350.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	41,650.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Total public for training/skills	39,100,000.00
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	39,100,000.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	375.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	500,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Nr of operations supported for investment (e.g. manure storage, manure treatment) (4.1, 4.4 and 4.3)	250.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	LU concerned by investment in livestock management in view of reducing GHG and ammonia emissions	11,500.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total investment € (public + private)	10,000,000.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	Total public expenditure €	4,000,000.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Area (ha) (e.g. green cover, catch crop, reduced fertilisation, extensification...)	538,490.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Total public expenditure (€)	299,600,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	1,000,000.00

11.1.5.5. 5E) Fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
T19: percentage of agricultural and forest land under management contracts contributing to carbon sequestration and conservation (focus area 5E)	0.32
Agricultural and forest land under management to foster carbon sequestration/conservation (ha) (focus area 5E)	18,385.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
18 Agricultural Area - total UAA	4,991,350.00
29 Forest and other wooded land (FOWL) (000) - total	787.95

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate for carbon sequestration	18,385.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	Total public expenditure (€)	74,800,000.00

11.1.6. P6: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

11.1.6.1. 6A) Facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.1.6.2. 6B) Fostering local development in rural areas

Target indicator(s) 2014-2020

Target indicator name	Target value 2023
Net population benefiting from improved services	0.00
T21: percentage of rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	74.40
Rural population covered by local development strategies (focus area 6B)	2,470,308.00
T22: percentage of rural population benefiting from improved services/infrastructures (focus area 6B)	0.00
T23: Jobs created in supported projects (Leader) (focus area 6B)	3,100.00

Context Indicator used as denominator for the target

Context Indicator name	Base year value
1 Population - rural	72.45
1 Population - intermediate	0
1 Population - total	4,582,769.00

Planned output indicator(s) 2014-2020

Measure name	Indicator name	Value
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Number of LAGs selected	28.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Population covered by LAG	2,470,308.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Total public expenditure (€) - preparatory support (19.1)	700,000.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Total public expenditure (€) - support for implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy (19.2)	194,350,000.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Total public expenditure (€) - preparation and implementation of cooperation activities of the local action group (19.3)	10,000,000.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	Total public expenditure (€) - support for running costs and animation (19.4)	44,950,000.00

11.1.6.3. 6C) Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

No measures have been selected in the strategy for this focus area.

11.2. Overview of the planned output and planned expenditure by measure and by focus area (generated automatically)

Measures	Indicators	P2		P3		P4			P5					P6			Total
		2A	2B	3A	3B	4A	4B	4C	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	6A	6B	6C	
M01	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Nbr of participants in trainings	6,650			6,650	56,650						41,650					111,600
	Training/skills acquisition (1.1) - Total public for training/skills	25,000,000			25,000,000	37,000,000						39,100,000					126,100,000
	Total public expenditure € (trainings, farm exchanges, demonstration) (1.1 to 1.3)	25,000,000			25,000,000	37,000,000						39,100,000					126,100,000
M02	Nr of beneficiaries advised (2.1)	375			10,000	750						375					11,500
	Total public expenditure € (2.1 to 2.3)	500,000			6,000,000	1,000,000						500,000					8,000,000
M04	Total investment € (public + private)	355,000,000	200,000,000		62,500,000	210,000,000				50,000,000		10,000,000					887,500,000
	Total public expenditure €	142,000,000	120,000,000		25,000,000	114,000,000				20,000,000		4,000,000					425,000,000
M07	Total public expenditure (€)					6,000,000											6,000,000
M10	Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate (10.1)					1,245,809											1,245,809
	Area (ha) (e.g. green cover, catch crop, reduced fertilisation, extensification...)											538,490					538,490
	Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate for carbon sequestration												18,385				18,385
	Total public expenditure (€)					1,213,750,630						299,600,000	74,800,000				1,588,150,630
M11	Area (ha) - conversion to organic farming (11.1)					16,000											16,000
	Area (ha) - maintenance of organic farming (11.2)					46,880											46,880
	Total public expenditure (€)					56,000,000											56,000,000
M12	Area (ha) - NATURA 2000 AG land (12.1)					186,000											186,000

																	0.00
	Total public expenditure (€)					73,250,000											73,250,000
M13																	0.00
	Area (ha) - other areas with significant NC (13.2)					3,402,000											3,402,000
	Area (ha) - areas with specific constraints (13.3)					15,000											15,000
	Total public expenditure (€)					1,370,000,000											1,370,000,000
M16	Total public expenditure € (16.1 to 16.9)	1,750,000	2,250,000		2,000,000						1,000,000					7,000,000	
M19	Number of LAGs selected															28	28
	Population covered by LAG															2,470,308	2,470,308
	Total public expenditure (€) - preparatory support (19.1)															700,000	700,000
	Total public expenditure (€) - support for implementation of operations under the CLLD strategy (19.2)															194,350,000	194,350,000
	Total public expenditure (€) - preparation and implementation of cooperation activities of the local action group (19.3)															10,000,000	10,000,000
	Total public expenditure (€) - support for running costs and animation (19.4)															44,950,000	44,950,000

11.3. Secondary effects: identification of potential contributions of Rural Development measures/sub-measures programmed under a given focus area to other focus areas / targets

FA from IP	Measure	P1			P2		P3		P4			P5					P6		
		1A	1B	1C	2A	2B	3A	3B	4A	4B	4C	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	6A	6B	6C
2A	M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	X	X	X	P														
	M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	X	X	X	P														
	M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)				P														
	M16 - Co-operation (art 35)				P														
2B	M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)					P													
	M16 - Co-operation (art 35)					P													
3B	M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	X	X	X				P											
	M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	X	X	X				P											
	M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)							P											
5B	M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)											P							
5D	M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	X	X	X										P					
	M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	X	X	X										P					
	M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)													P					
	M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)													P					
	M16 - Co-operation (art 35)													P					
5E	M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)														P				
6B	M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)																	P	
P4 (AGRI)	M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)								P	P	P								
	M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)								P	P	P								

M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)										P	P	P								
M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)										P	P	P				X	X			
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)										P	P	P								
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)										P	P	P				X	X			
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)										P	P	P								
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)							X			P	P	P								
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)										P	P	P								

11.4. Support table to show how environmental measure/schemes are programmed to achieve one (or more) environment/climate targets

11.4.1. Agricultural Land

11.4.1.1. M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)

Type of operation or group of type of operation	AECM typology	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C	Reducing GHG and ammonia emissions FA 5D	Carbon sequestration/conservation FA 5E
Commonages	Better management, reduction of mineral fertilizers and pesticides (inclus. Integrated production)	158,000,000.00	240,000.00	X	X	X	X	
Low Emission Slurry Spreading	Better management, reduction of mineral fertilizers and pesticides (inclus. Integrated production)	5,580,000.00	160,000.00		X	X	X	
Minimum Tillage	Soil cover, ploughing techniques, low tillage, Conservation agriculture	5,580,000.00	28,000.00			X	X	
Environmental Management of Fallow Land	Soil cover, ploughing techniques, low tillage, Conservation agriculture	13,075,125.00	3,490.00	X	X	X	X	
Wild Bird Cover	Soil cover, ploughing techniques, low tillage, Conservation agriculture	37,665,000.00	8,400.00	X				
Planting New Hedgerows	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower	32,550,000.00	6,500.00	X				X

	strips, hedgerows, trees)							
Traditional Stone Wall Maintenance	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	16,275,000.00	11,600.00	X		X		
Traditional Orchards	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	263,887.00	225.00	X	X	X	X	X
Coppicing Hedgerows	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	30,690,000.00	6,975.00	X				X
Farmland Habitat (Private Natura)	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	73,470,000.00	186,000.00	X	X		X	
Planting a Grove of Native Trees	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	8,788,500.00	4,335.00	X		X		X
Laying Hedgerows	Creation, upkeep of ecological features (e.g. field margins, buffer areas, flower strips, hedgerows, trees)	2,580,750.00	350.00	X				X
Arable Grass Margins	Maintenance of HNV arable and grassland systems (e.g. mowing techniques, hand labour, leaving of	2,420,000.00	2,420.00	X	X	X		

	winter stubbles in arable areas), introduction of extensive grazing practices, conversion of arable land to grassland.							
Traditional Hay Meadows	Maintenance of HNV arable and grassland systems (e.g. mowing techniques, hand labour, leaving of winter stubbles in arable areas), introduction of extensive grazing practices, conversion of arable land to grassland.	175,770,000.00	111,600.00	X	X	X	X	
Low Input Permanent Pasture	Maintenance of HNV arable and grassland systems (e.g. mowing techniques, hand labour, leaving of winter stubbles in arable areas), introduction of extensive grazing practices, conversion of arable land to grassland.	233,616,000.00	149,000.00	X	X	X	X	
Catch Crops	Crop diversification, crop rotation	64,867,500.00	84,000.00		X	X		
Protection of Water Courses	Others	34,875,000.00	11,625.00	X	X	X		
High Status Water Area	Others	23,950,000.00	4,650.00	X	X	X		
Riparian Margins	Others	11,160,000.00	4,650.00	X	X	X		
Rare Breeds	Others	2,790,000.00	0.00	X				
Vulnerable Water Areas	Others	45,750,000.00	23,250.00	X	X	X		

Bird and Bat Boxes and Conservation of Solitary Bees	Others	1,488,000.00	2,976.00	X				
Farmland Birds	Others	342,751,500.00	195,300.00	X				
Protection of Archaeological Sites	Others	6,161,250.00	463.00	X		X		

11.4.1.2. M11 - Organic farming (art 29)

Submeasure	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C	Reducing GHG and ammonia emissions FA 5D	Carbon sequestration/conservation FA 5E
11.1 - payment to convert to organic farming practices and methods	15,500,000.00	16,000.00	X	X	X		
11.2 - payment to maintain organic farming practices and methods	40,500,000.00	46,880.00	X	X	X		

11.4.1.3. M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)

Submeasure	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C	Reducing GHG and ammonia emissions FA 5D	Carbon sequestration/conservation FA 5E
12.1 - compensation payment for Natura 2000 agricultural areas							
12.3 - compensation payment for agricultural areas included in river basin management plans							

11.4.1.4. M08 - Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests (art 21-26)

Submeasure	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C	Reducing GHG and ammonia emissions FA 5D	Carbon sequestration/conservation FA 5E
8.1 - support for afforestation/creation of woodland							
8.2 - support for establishment and maintenance of agro-forestry systems							

11.4.2. Forest areas

11.4.2.1. M15 - Forest environmental and climate services and forest conservation (art 34)

Type of operation or group of type of operation	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C

11.4.2.2. M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)

Submeasure	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C
12.2 - compensation payment for Natura 2000 forest areas					

11.4.2.3. M08 - Investments in forest area development and improvement of the viability of forests (art 21-26)

Submeasure	Total expenditure (EUR)	Total area (ha) by measure or type of operations	Biodiversity FA 4A	Water management FA 4B	Soil management FA 4C
8.5 - support for investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems					

11.5. Programme-Specific Target and Output

Specific Target indicator(s)

Code	Target Indicator Name	Focus Area	Target value 2023	Unit
PSTI FA3B	Number of Participants in Knowledge Transfer Groups (focus area 3B)	3B	26,600.00	Persons
Comment: <i>PSTIFA3B - Programme Specific Target Indicator Focus Area 3B</i>				

Specific Output indicator(s)

Code	Output Indicator Name	Measure	Focus Area	Planned output	Unit
	Number of Traditional Buildings Restored	M07	P4	350.00	Traditional Buildings
	Number of Operations of Support for Non-Productive Investments under GLAS	M10	P4	40,000.00	Beneficiaries

12. ADDITIONAL NATIONAL FINANCING

For measures and operations falling within the scope of Article 42 of the Treaty, a table on additional national financing per measure in accordance with Article 82 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, including the amounts per measure and indication of compliance with the criteria under RD regulation.

Measure	Additional National Financing during the period 2014-2020 (€)
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	0.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	0.00
M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	0.00
M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)	0.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	3,170,000.00
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)	0.00
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)	0.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	0.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	0.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	0.00
M20 - Technical assistance Member States (art 51-54)	0.00
M113 - Early retirement	0.00
M131 - Meeting standards based on Community legislation	0.00
M341 - Skills acquisition, animation and implementation	0.00
Total	3,170,000.00

12.1. M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.2. M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.3. M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.4. M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.5. M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

Additional national financing provided for Measure 10 in addition to the amount co-financed in the Programme. This money will be spent on the same actions and in accordance with EU rules.

12.6. M11 - Organic farming (art 29)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.7. M113 - Early retirement

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. This measure is programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

12.8. M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, as Natura areas will be targeted through Measure 10. This measure is programmed exclusively to provide for ongoing commitments from the 2007-2013 programming period.

12.9. M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.10. M131 - Meeting standards based on Community legislation

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.

12.11. M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.12. M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

12.13. M20 - Technical assistance Member States (art 51-54)

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

n/a

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12.14. M341 - Skills acquisition, animation and implementation

Indication of compliance of the operations with the criteria under Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013

This measure does not form part of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.

13. ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR STATE AID ASSESMENT

For the measures and operations which fall outside the scope of Article 42 of the Treaty, the table of aid schemes falling under Article 81(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 to be used for the implementation of the programmes, including the title of the aid scheme, as well as the EAFRD contribution, national cofinancing and additional national funding. Compatibility with Union State aid rules must be ensured over the entire duration of the programme.

The table shall be accompanied by a commitment from the Member State that, where required under State aid rules or under specific conditions in a State aid approval decision, such measures will be notified individually pursuant to Article 108(3) of the Treaty.

Measure	Title of the aid scheme	EAFRD (€)	National Cofinancing (€)	Additional National Funding (€)	Total (€)
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) & Collaborative Farming				
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	157,000,000.00	93,000,000.00		250,000,000.00
Total (€)		157,000,000.00	93,000,000.00	0.00	250,000,000.00

13.1. M16 - Co-operation (art 35)

Title of the aid scheme: European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) & Collaborative Farming

EAFRD (€):

National Cofinancing (€):

Additional National Funding (€):

Total (€):

13.1.1.1. Indication:*

As this measure is related to agriculture activity and falls within the scope of Article 42 of the Treaty it is therefore exempt from State aid rules under Article 81(2) of the Rural Development regulation 1305/2013.

In relation to EIPs, the structure of support entails a competitive process to identify projects. Given this it is difficult to pre-empt whether emerging projects would fall within the scope of Article 42 of the Treaty. It would be expected, however, that projects selected under the EIP for Agriculture and Sustainable Productivity would relate to agricultural activity. The possible State Aid implications of EIP projects will be assessed again at selection, and any necessary notifications will be made.

13.2. M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Title of the aid scheme: LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

EAFRD (€): 157,000,000.00

National Cofinancing (€): 93,000,000.00

Additional National Funding (€):

Total (€): 250,000,000.00

13.2.1.1. Indication:*

For LEADER operations under Articles 42-44 of Regulation 1305/2013 and Articles 32-35 of Regulation 1303/2013, these operations will be compliant with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18th December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid. In this context, financial support up to €200,000 will be granted in accordance with the de minimis regulation.

Any LEADER operation that contains economic activity will not be given aid over and above the de-minimis limits. In the 2007-2013 programme period Ireland received a State Aid exemption for projects of a non-economic nature in order to facilitate a maximum grant of €500,000. Ireland is examining the

possibility of supporting such projects in the 2014-2020 programming period, is aware of the state aid implications and is looking specifically at the way in which such projects can be state aid compliant. This will involve examining the potential of a block exemption or a system of notification as potential projects emerge from the LDS process. Any required State Aid notifications will be made at that stage.

14. INFORMATION ON COMPLEMENTARITY

14.1. Description of means for the complementarity and coherence with:

14.1.1. Other Union instruments and, in particular with ESI Funds and Pillar 1, including greening, and other instruments of the common agricultural policy

Complementarity/coherence with other ESI funds

The basis for the complementarity/coherence of the EAFRD with other ESI funds (namely the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) lies in the contribution of the EAFRD across a range of the eleven thematic objectives set out in Annex I of the Common Provisions Regulation, including:

- strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
- improving the competitiveness of the agriculture sector;
- supporting the shift to a low-carbon economy, promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management, preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; and
- promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

Ireland's Partnership Agreement sets out the various ways in which RDP measures will contribute to these thematic objectives. It is also clear from the Partnership Agreement that other ESI Funds in Ireland will also make contributions to the thematic objectives which the RDP contributes to.

Thus, the clear challenge is to ensure that, in each of these areas, the interventions supported through the EAFRD will be implemented in a coordinated manner so as to avoid duplication of funding and create synergies with the other ESI funds and to ensure an integrated use of the funds. This challenge is being addressed in a number of ways.

The National Coordination Committee for the Funds (NCCF) - at national level, the NCCF was established in order to ensure coordination of and complementarity between the ESI funds. DAFM participates in this Committee with representatives from:

- the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform;
- the Department of Education and Skills;
- the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government;
- the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation;
- the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources;
- the Border Midlands and West Regional Assembly;
- the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly; and
- the Special EU Programme Body.

A sub-group of the NCCF, involving relevant Government Departments and representatives of the regional assemblies (the Managing Authorities for all the ESI Operational Programmes), meets on a regular basis in order to coordinate input from the various agencies to the development of Ireland's national Partnership Agreement. This mechanism allowed DAFM's work on the consultation/design phase of Ireland's Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020 to be embedded in an overarching process designed to ensure an integrated use of the ESI funds.

The NCCF will continue this work during the finalisation of Operational Programmes, and will also work to ensure the necessary cooperation between all of the relevant bodies in addressing issues that arise in the course of programme implementation and in exploiting ongoing opportunities for greater synergies across the ESI funds. Examples of how this structure has and can facilitate increased complementarity include:

- The investment priorities in the ERDF OPs will complement the Rural Development Priorities addressed via the RDP. For example, the ERDF will contribute to the competitiveness, innovation capacity and sustainability of the regions, which cover extensive rural areas (from peri-urban to rural heartland to remote and coastal areas). These themes are also central to the intervention logic underlying the RDP.
- ERDF investment for energy efficient investment in housing is clearly complementary to support for more energy efficient farming practices and possible interventions via LEADER. Thus, the national challenge of increased energy efficiency and supporting a low-carbon economy is addressed in a multi-faceted way across different funding structures.
- Investment via the ERDF OPs and the RDP will dovetail in an integrated approach to overall national development goals - the requirement that a minimum 5% of ERDF resources be allocated to integrated urban development will complement the focus on integrated rural development in the RDP.
- ERDF co-financed investment in next generation broadband in rural areas that have not been provided with such services by commercial operators will help to achieve the RDP objectives of improving agricultural competitiveness, and achieving balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities. It will also help to achieve a further thematic objective, namely, the achievement of more efficient public administration, through the wider availability of online services and the encouragement of farmers to use web-based application/payment facilities. The issue of broadband in rural areas is also a theme which emerged from the RDP consultation process, and in particular the LEADER consultation process. As a complement to ERDF investment in this area, the issue of broadband has been identified within the emerging LEADER themes and it is intended that support here will be focused on training and capacity building issues.
- Investments in research, technological development and innovation under the ERDF will focus on the areas identified in the recent national research prioritisation exercise, which include several that are of relevance to the agri-food sector (DAFM will play a lead role in respect of two of the fourteen priority areas, namely, Sustainable Food Production and Processing, and Food for Health). The NCCF will help to ensure that these investments complement EAFRD co-financed investments in innovation at farm level. In particular, there is the possibility for complementarity here with support for EIPs in the RDP. EIP Operational Groups have the potential to link to existing research and innovation projects and to establish greater linkages to on-the-ground practices. Therefore, the NCCF will provide a link between the OPs to ensure that any potential synergies are taken into account as measures are rolled out.
- Similarly in relation to the ESF, there are clear complementarities with the investments set out in the RDP. For example, support for upskilling of the labour force via ESF funding will complement various knowledge transfer measures within the RDP and provide a coordinated approach to developing the knowledge base at the national level. In addition, the ESF investment in social inclusion measures will offer an opportunity for complementary support which will emerge via Local Development Strategies in LEADER.
- In certain cases, beneficiaries under the RDP will be in coastal communities which will also be the focus of EMFF support. Possible synergies here include the coordination of activities between LEADER Local Action Groups and Fisheries Local Action Groups. Complementarity will be ensured via the Coordination Committee in place to manage the mono fund approach set out in Ireland's Partnership Agreement. Support for Natura 2000 via the EMFF and RDP will also ensure

that a comprehensive and coordinated approach across funds is in place in addressing priorities relating both to marine and agricultural areas.

- ‘Cross-Membership’ of Monitoring Committees - although the precise membership of the Monitoring Committee for Ireland’s Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020 is still to be finalised, as the Monitoring Committee is established it is intended that complementarity with the other ESI funds will be facilitated through DAFM being represented on the Monitoring Committees of the other Operational Programmes. Similarly, representatives of the other Operational Programme’s Managing Authorities will participate in the RDP Monitoring Committee. This cross membership will further ensure that issues of complementarity and coherence of funding will continue to be addressed as Operational Programmes are finalised and implemented. The NCCF has also provided the forum to ensure that there is no double funding in place, and will continue to perform this function through the programming period. In addition, all the Managing Authorities will be members of the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee, providing a further channel to facilitate complementarity and coordination.
- The NCCF has also established linkages to the network of Cabinet Sub Committees and Senior Officials Groups chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach. Thus, issues relating to ESI Funds have been considered by this high level central coordination structure, adding a further level of integration and complementarity.

Complementarity/coherence with Pillar 1 and other instruments of the CAP

The 2014-2020 RDP, by focusing on the sustainable development of a competitive agriculture sector and the maintenance of economically viable rural areas, will actively complement the role of direct payments and the market support measures available to farmers under Pillar 1 of the CAP. In order to maximise potential synergies and the added value of Union support across both pillars, Ireland has adopted a two-pronged approach.

The first element has been the selection of complementary policy options and measures. For example, the consultation processes under Pillars 1 and 2 highlighted the importance of generational renewal in agriculture. Ireland has therefore chosen to combine implementation of a young farmers scheme under Pillar 1 with targeted supports for young farmers and new entrants under Pillar 2. The former will assist young farmers in the initial stages of establishing a farming enterprise in their own names by providing a top-up to their direct payment, while the latter, through measures such as increased capital investment aid rates and support for collaborative farming arrangements, will provide young people with alternative pathways into agriculture as well as the means to adopt the most up-to-date technology from start-up stage. Similar approaches have or will be adopted, for example, in the selection and specification of environment measures under Pillar 2 that go beyond the baseline established by the greening measures to be implemented under Pillar 1. It should also be noted, that certain issues which emerged from the preparatory analysis underlying this RDP will not be supported under the RDP but are addressed under Pillar 1. For example, support for protein crops under Pillar 1 will help to mitigate issues related to dependence on imported feed and fertilisers which emerged in the RDP design process.

The approach taken in Pillars 1 and 2 to equivalence in respect of greening is set out in Section 8.1.

The second element is the administration of all measures in a coherent and consistent manner across both

pillars. DAFM will achieve this through an integrated governance structure that will:

- coordinate more effectively the business and IT dimensions of measure design and implementation under each of Pillars 1 and 2, and
- ensure complementarity between the two pillars through the participation of key personnel, including a new high-level business coordinator for the implementation of CAP reform, in the activities under each pillar.

This will ensure that activities such as the implementation of the common monitoring and evaluation framework under both pillars will be undertaken as effectively as possible. It will also help to identify potential synergies or efficiencies that might be exploited in the delivery of new measures under the reformed CAP.

Procedures are also in place to ensure there is no double funding across various funding streams administered by DAFM. For example, national and EU supports are in place for Producer Organisations in the Fruit and Vegetable sector. All beneficiaries for this support are required to declare if they are in receipt of any other funding from DAFM and specific checks are in place for all beneficiaries to ensure there is no cross over in funding. These procedures will continue to be in place in respect of RDP funding. Similarly potential double funding between the greening payment (crop rotation) and the Organic Farming Scheme is avoided as the premium is based on both additional costs and income foregone when compared to conventional farming practice. There is no specific payment for crop-rotation and in any case, the premium only partially compensates for the calculated loss.

14.1.2. Where a Member State has opted to submit a national programme and a set of regional programmes as referred to in Article 6(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, information on complementarity between them

Not Applicable

14.2. Where relevant, information on the complementarity with other Union instruments, including LIFE

Other Union financial instruments of particular relevance from an EAFRD perspective are the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE+) fund and the Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020) fund.

Ireland's Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020 places particular emphasis on the sustainable development of the agriculture sector. In doing so it aims to contribute to the EU cross-cutting objectives of environment, innovation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. DAFM will therefore seek to ensure that investments made under the RDP will complement, and build on, activities supported under each of these other financial instruments.

In relation to the LIFE Programme, DAFM will maintain close contact with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in order to monitor environmental and climate action projects that will either complement similar initiatives, or provide the basis for future investments, under the RDP. The Burren LIFE project provided the basis for the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme,

which is to be extended under the 2014-2020 RDP, and it is intended that similar opportunities arising from the LIFE programme will be exploited where possible and appropriate. LIFE 2014-2020 will incorporate a specific sub-programme for Climate Action and the creation of a new type of 'integrated project.' In the event that new 'integrated projects' of the type foreseen in the LIFE programme are considered in Ireland, and particularly where these relate to Natura 2000 network management or climate change mitigation and adaptation activities, DAFM will work closely with DECLG to ensure that they complement similar measures under the RDP.

The coupling of research and innovation under Horizon 2020 in order to tackle societal challenges and improve economic competitiveness mirrors efforts already undertaken by DAFM in recent years to link agricultural research more closely to on-farm practice. For example, support for technology adoption in the dairy, beef and sheep sectors, which has been available since 2010, will be built upon through output-focused investment in Knowledge Transfer Groups under the 2014-2020 RDP. In addition, support for EIP operational groups will help to establish closer links between farmers, private sector bodies and research institutions in order to ensure the outputs of research are clearly focused on end-user needs. In order to ensure that these activities complement the activities being financed under Horizon 2020's 'Societal Challenge' pillar (under the heading 'Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime research and inland water research and the bioeconomy'), communication within DAFM between its Research Divisions and the line division implementing the Knowledge Transfer and Innovation measures will continue on from the measure design phase into the implementation and roll-out phase.

15. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

15.1. The designation by the Member State of all authorities referred to in Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 Article 65(2) and a summary description of the management and control structure of the programme requested under Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Article 55(3)(i) and arrangements under Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 Article 74(3)

15.1.1. Authorities

Authority	Name of the authority	Head of the authority	Address	Email
Managing authority	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Rural Development Division	Mr. Fintan O'Brien Head of Rural Development Division	Rural Development Division, Dept. of Agriculture, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Ireland	Fintan.O'Brien@agriculture.gov.ie
Certification body	BDO	Jenny Coughlan, Director, Risk and Advisory Services	BDO, Beux Lane House, Mercer St Lower, Dublin 2, Ireland	jcoughlan@bdo.ie
Accredited paying agency	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Finance Division	Mr. Heber McMahon Head of Finance Division	Finance Division, Dept. of Agriculture, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, Ireland	Heber.McMahon@agriculture.gov.ie

15.1.2. Summary description of the management and control structure of the programme and arrangements for the independent examination of complaints

15.1.2.1. Management and control structure

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the lead Ministry for the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. Rural Development Division within DAFM will act as the RDP's Managing Authority. The functions of the Managing Authority encompass the efficient and effective management and implementation of the RDP, and include

- Ensuring that mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme and the collection of relevant data are in place
- Ensuring that beneficiaries under the RDP are informed of the obligations arising from support granted
- Ensuring that the relevant progress and evaluation reports in relation to RDP implementation are provided
- Ensuring publicity arrangements for the RDP are in place
- Putting in place implementation support structures for the RDP, including the establishment of a monitoring committee and National Rural Network.

The Paying Agency is made up of a number of elements, and its functions include putting in place an administrative organisation and a system of internal control which provide sufficient guarantees that

payments are legal and regular, and properly accounted for. The Paying Agency incorporates

- Finance Division within DAFM, which manages the claims for expenditure under EAFRD.
- Implementing line divisions within DAFM. These divisions are responsible for the design, implementation and administration (including administrative checks) of RDP measures. These divisions also process payments for individual measures and report accordingly to Finance Division.
- Inspectorate and technical divisions. These divisions are responsible for many of the on-the-spot field inspections which underlie the control regime for RDP measures.

In addition, DECLG is a delegated body with certain delegated Paying Agency functions in relation to LEADER. DAFM will formally delegate a range of paying agency functions pertaining to the delivery of the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme to DECLG. Functions that relate to the payment of Community Aid and the submission to the Commission of the forecasts and declarations provided for in the regulatory framework will be retained by DAFM. DECLG will have oversight of the LEADER elements of the programme from strategy and LAG selection to financial management and monitoring and evaluation. Responsibilities outlined in the regulations with regard to reporting on the LEADER elements of the RDP will be coordinated by DECLG through DAFM as the Managing Authority

In order to ensure a high level of coordination between DECLG and DAFM, a memorandum of understanding is signed by both DAFM and DECLG which formalises the the position of each department. This memorandum has been, and will continue to be, updated as circumstances require and sets out the role of DECLG in a range of areas such as operational arrangements, monitoring and controlling of expenditure, the communication of information to LAGs and the issuance of payments. In addition, the Departments will liaise on a continuous basis regarding ongoing issues and funding priorities and a coordination committee is in place to ensure regular structured communication. Finally, each Department is represented on the other's internal Accreditation Review Group to ensure that consistency of approach to financial management responsibilities is maintained.

Deloitte & Touche were appointed as the certifying body to DAFM for the year 2014. The current contract for audit services relating to the certification of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine annual accounts charged to the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), for the financial year ending 15 October 2015 has been awarded to BDO for a period of 22 months (necessitated by the introduction of the legality and regularity audit) and the term may be extended for a period or periods of up to 12 months with a maximum of two such extensions on the same terms and conditions. The certifying body is independent and is appointed in line with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 1306/2013 and is in place as an overseer of the truthfulness, completeness and accuracy of the paying agency's accounts and is appointed by open tender.

15.1.2.2. Arrangements for the examination of complaints

Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine – Appeals Procedures

While there has been a longstanding system of internal reviews within the Department, where requested by applicants under RDP schemes in this Department, the first independent examination is facilitated by the Agricultural Appeals Office.

The Agriculture Appeals Office is an independent agency established to provide an appeals service to farmers who are unhappy with the Department's decisions regarding their entitlements under certain schemes. The Agriculture Appeals Act 2001 (as subsequently amended), along with the Agriculture Appeals Regulations 2002, sets down the functions of the Director and the Appeals Officers, the decisions that may be appealed and the procedures to be followed in respect of agriculture appeals. Under Section 14(1) of the Agriculture Appeals Regulations 2002, the decision of an Appeals Officer shall have regard to the principles of natural justice and comply with any relevant legislation and terms, conditions and guidelines of the Minister governing or relating to the scheme in question.

When a final decision issues from the Department (i.e. after internal Department review), the applicant will be notified of their option to appeal. The scheme applicant (appellant), dissatisfied with the decision, may appeal in writing or by completing a 'Notice of Appeal' form and submitting it to the Agriculture Appeals Office. The Appeals Office requests the relevant file from the Department and a statement regarding the appellant's grounds of appeal. On receipt of the file and statement, the Director assigns the case to an Appeals Officer. Appellants are entitled to request an oral hearing as part of their appeal. The Agriculture Appeals Office contacts the appellant to arrange an oral hearing if required, or if deemed necessary by the Appeals Officer. It is the policy of the office to discuss each case with the appellant, where possible. The Appeals Officer considers all the evidence in full (including any evidence presented at an oral hearing if there was one). The Appeals Officer makes a determination on the appeal and notifies the appellant of the decision in writing, setting out the reasons for that decision. The Department will also be notified of the decision.

The decision of an Appeals Officer is final and conclusive. Further options available to an appellant include:

- An Appeals Officer may change a decision where there is new evidence, new facts or a relevant change in circumstances.
- On request, from either party, The Director of Agriculture Appeals may revise a decision where there has been a mistake made in relation to the law or the facts of the case.
- An appellant may wish to raise any issues arising with the Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2 (01 6395600).
- A point of law may be raised with the High Court.

Further information is available on <http://www.agriappeals.gov.ie/>

Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Appeals Procedure

In the context of the LEADER elements of the RDP, similar appeals systems to those in place in DAFM will be implemented in order to ensure that all beneficiaries have access to a fully transparent and fair appeals mechanism. There will be separate appeals mechanisms required at LAG level and at Managing Authority/Paying Agency level that will follow a logical and fully outlined process. The appeals systems will be fully detailed in the operating rules for the LEADER elements of the RDP.

15.2. The envisaged composition of the Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee will be set up within three months of EU approval of this programme. It will be chaired by DAFM and is likely to include representation from:

- The main representative bodies in the farming sector;
- Representative bodies reflective of a wide range of rural issues and interests;
- Organisations with a core focus on rural development issues;
- Representatives of local councils;
- Representatives of the Regional Assemblies;
- Bodies representing environmental, biodiversity and climate change interests;
- Bodies working in the area of the promotion of equality issues;
- A range of Government Departments reflecting relevant policy and administrative issues such as public expenditure, equality, environmental issues, local government, social protection, and the management of natural resources;
- Bodies representing issues of national heritage preservation;
- Bodies representing the horizontal principles as set out in EU regulation; and
- The Managing Authorities of the ESIF funds.

The EU Commission will participate in its work in an advisory capacity.

The Monitoring Committee will meet at least once a year and will review implementation of the programme and progress made towards achieving its objectives by means of financial, output/target indicators, ex-ante conditionalities and performance reviews.

The Monitoring Committee may make observations to the Managing Authority regarding implementation and evaluation of the programme and will examine all evaluations before they are sent to the Commission.

The Committee will be consulted by Managing Authority, and shall issue an opinion within 4 months of the decision approving the RDP, on the selection criteria for financed operations, and will issue an opinion on any amendment of the Programme. The Monitoring Committee will also form part of the National Rural Network (NRN).

15.3. Provisions to ensure that the programme is publicised, including through the national rural network, making reference to the information and publicity strategy referred to in Article 13 of Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014

Over the period of the programme the Managing Authority will disseminate comprehensive information on the RDP using all suitable media facilities. The role of and financial contributions from the EAFRD will be referenced in the appropriate information measures made available to interested applicants.

The communication plan will involve using a number of media channels to communicate to the primary and secondary audiences that will be both constant and in phases over the seven year period. These channels are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------|
| 1. Advertising campaign | - | Phases |
| 2. Website | - | Constant |
| 3. Print material | - | Constant |
| 4. PR | - | Constant |
| 5. Media relationship management | - | Constant |
| 6. Seminars / Road shows/ Conferences | - | Phases |
| 7. NRN/ENRD/EIP | - | Constant |

The advertising campaign is planned to run over a number of concentrated phases to achieve maximum impact and awareness of the programme. The timing of each phase will be tailored to achieve and deliver on the aims. Media planning will be based on using all available market research tools.

The initial phases in 2014/2015 will involve extensive advertisement in the national newspapers, farming press, development of website information and distribution to the target groups of print material on the Programme. This is the key launch phase for announcing the commencement of the programme and making both primary and secondary audiences aware of the Programme and the positive impact this will have.

To build on the momentum that the launch phase will deliver, the focus of the next phase, over the period of the Programme, is to further roll-out the Programme information by way of further public advertisement, seminars, information centres at major rural/agricultural shows and updates on the website. Progress reports will be made available to beneficiaries and the general public using the appropriate media tools during the programming period.

The timing of each phase is tailored to achieve and deliver on the aims set out above, more specifically as follows:

Phase 1 On approval of the programme

This is the key launch phase for announcing the commencement of the RDP and making both potential beneficiaries and the general public aware of the Programme and the positive impact this will have. The media selection of Department press releases and website, national press, farming press, national and regional radio will be relied upon to deliver this phase. There will also be “Roadshows” on some new schemes and the Department will promote the new RDP at the National Ploughing Championships and other large Agricultural shows.

Phase 2 On the launch of the first schemes

Building on the momentum that the launch phase will deliver, the focus of this phase is to further roll-out the programme information and updates. The media selection is as per phase 1.

Phase 3 2016

This phase is designed to act as both a reminder and an update of the progress of the RDP.

Phase 4 2018

This is the final planned phase and will be used to further update the beneficiaries on the RDP and to highlight the progress from 2014. Again, the media selection is based on phase 1.

The information measures will focus on the following objectives:

- Information for potential applicants and beneficiaries;
- Promoting greater general public understanding of the objectives and achievements of the programme

in Ireland; and

- Ensuring recognition of the role of, and financial contribution from, the EAFRD.

To achieve these objectives, the Managing Authority will undertake the following communication functions:

- Co-ordinate the communication plan for the Programme;
- Assist the Monitoring Committee in the review, update and dissemination of the communication plan;
- Publish and circulate the approved Programme and a summary booklet for potential beneficiaries and other interested parties;
- Make the Programme and the summary booklet available throughout the implementing Departments' national and local office networks;
- Develop and use information tools including leaflets/posters, advertisements, display stands, advertisements and the Department's website to promote a greater understanding of the Programme;
- Ensure the role of, and contributions from, the EAFRD are referenced on the websites of the implementing Departments, information leaflets and in their periodic publications;
- Publish information leaflets/forms/guidance documents on each of the support measures in print and electronic form;
- Participate in seminar, conferences, information days, rural/agricultural shows to promote a greater understanding of the Programme and the implementation and monitoring arrangements in Ireland;
- Make reference in the information measures to the responsibility of beneficiaries to display an explanatory plaque if in receipt of programme support for an investment greater than €50,000 and a billboard if greater than €500,000; and
- Provide updates on Departments' websites on the programme and specific support measures.

In addition, the Managing Authority will perform a support role for the implementing Divisions and the DECLG by the provision of advice on implementing the publicity and information regulation and assistance in the implementation of the communication plan.

Administrative Department/Bodies responsible for implementation of Communication Plan

Rural Development Division of the DAFM is the Managing Authority under the RDP and has responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the communication plan. This task is shared with DECLG. As DECLG has responsibility for the measures under the LEADER element of the programme, it will have a pivotal role in ensuring implementation of the communication plan in relation to this particular measure. As

part of their role in the management and implementation of LEADER, DECLG will ensure that Local Action Groups contracted to deliver LEADER will be informed of their responsibilities in the context of information and publicity actions. Compliance in this regard will form part of the control checks carried out over the programming period.

The Managing Authority has the responsibility to lead the overall RDP communication process and to involve the NRN in ensuring publicity for the programme. The NRN is obliged to implement a communication plan, as a part of its action plan. Accordingly, the role of the NRN in relation to information and publicity actions will be clearly set out in the tender process and in subsequent annual action plans for the NRN once established.

The information and publicity strategy as defined by the Managing Authority should form the basis for the NRN's communication plan.

15.4. Description of mechanisms to ensure coherence with regard to local development strategies implemented under LEADER, activities envisaged under the co-operation measure referred to in Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, the basic services and village renewal in rural areas measure referred to in Article 20 of that Regulation, and other ESI Funds

The Irish RDP will implement measures as outlined in Article 20 (Basic Services and Village Renewal in rural areas) under Measure 7 via the Traditional Farm Building Scheme. It is also envisaged that projects funded under the LEADER measure will support basic services and village renewal in rural areas. The coordination structures put in place between DAFM and DECLG will ensure a coordinated approach here. With regards to any interventions funded under the LEADER element of the RDP including those activities outlined in Article 35 the implementation system will ensure that full consideration is given during the design process to funding from other EU and national funds. The more integrated approach proposed for the delivery of local development interventions at a local level will facilitate full consideration of all funding mechanisms when designing interventions within the context of a Local Development Strategy. This will ensure coherence with other funding mechanisms, including EU funds. In this context Ireland will also support capacity building initiatives in the preparatory phase of LDS development that will support LAGS to ensure coherence.

15.5. Description of actions to achieve a reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries referred to in Article 27(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

As part of the design process for RDP measures, the issue of administrative burden has been addressed. The development of a coherent approach to this issue across measures has been facilitated by the work of the RDP Coordinating Committee set up to oversee the RDP design and implementation process. This coordinated approach has facilitated the inclusion of a number of factors which will alleviate the administrative burden for applicants, including:

- The facilitation of a common approach to the development and issuing of measure application

forms. Ensuring a consistent approach to application form lay-outs, language, and definitions will be of benefit to applicants applying to multiple measures.

- A common approach has been taken to the delivery of online electronic applications to measures where possible. The increased use of online applications on its own will lead to a significant reduction in the administrative burden for applicants, and ensuring that online application processes for separate measures are developed in a consistent manner will further simplify the process for beneficiaries. It will also lead to the more effective and efficient processing of applications by administrations resulting in the timely issuing of payments under the various measures.
- The shared experience of previous programming periods has facilitated the identification of best practices which can be utilised for other measures. For example, the approach taken to information dissemination in relation to the launch of measures and the requirements of beneficiaries in particular measures has led to the identification of best practices which can be used across measures in the current programming period. Such practices include the provision of road show / information seminars for applicants to outline the main provisions of measures, the publication of clear terms and conditions documents at Departmental locations and on the Departmental website, and the briefing of agricultural and other support agents in relation to the main provisions of measures.
- As part of the scheme design process, the potential to use simplified cost methods where appropriate has been examined. Simplified cost option will lead to efficiencies for the administration of measures, but will also simplify requirements for applicants. Simplified cost options will be introduced in keeping with the Commission Guidance on Simplified Cost Options where appropriate, for example under Measure 1 and Measure 19. As operations to be financed under Measure 19 emerge from the Local Development Strategy process, the possible uses of Simplified Cost Options will be further examined. Further details in relation to the use of Simplified Cost Options will be confirmed with the Commission in advance of the launch of the LDS selection process.
- In the context of the LEADER measure, streamlined processes will also be implemented that will ensure the administrative burden is minimised for beneficiaries. The new implementation system proposed to address issues around audit compliance will place the burden for ensuring such compliance on a competent body who will work constructively with the LAGS and beneficiaries to ensure the simplest application and payment processes possible.

15.6. Description of the use of technical assistance including actions related to the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control of the programme and its implementation, as well as the activities concerning previous or subsequent programming periods as referred to in Article 59(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

The Technical assistance for EAFRD will fund:

- Any external expertise which may be required in relation to the evaluation milestones set out in the Evaluation Plan;
- the national rural network (NRN);
- the Communication Plan on information and publicity;
- expenses incurred in the operation of the National Monitoring Committee;
- the administrative support service which is to be set up by competitive tender in order to support the delivery of the animal health and welfare advisory service as set out in Measure 2.

It is clear that the Technical Assistance measure will provide valuable support to underpin the effective implementation of the RDP. In particular, funding can be made available to ensure rigorous evaluation of the Programme. In addition the funding of the NRN provides a clear opportunity to ensure that the Action Plan for the NRN feeds into strategic policy issues in the sector.

This range of actions will incorporate a number of beneficiaries as follows:

- Some elements of the evaluative work supporting the RDP may be carried out by externally appointed evaluators,
- some of the Managing Authorities costs incurred in operating the Monitoring Committee and implementing publicity actions,
- and the National Rural Network will be a beneficiary to be appointed by competitive process.

For the National Rural Network, work on the intervention logic for the Network is ongoing and this will underpin the competitive process. However, it is envisaged that eligible costs here will include administrative costs, the costs associated with carrying out particular evaluative projects, publicity costs, costs associated with organising and hosting RDP events, and costs associated with attending relevant EU meetings etc.

In relation to evaluation projects to be awarded via competitive process, eligible costs will include the staffing costs involved in delivering projects as well as any associated research or field work costs (eg related to surveys etc).

The Managing Authority has experience of administering the Technical Assistance budget from previous RDP periods, and this experience will help to ensure appropriate control systems are in place. In addition, any procurement procedures undertaken will involve the advice of the Central Procurement Unit in DAFM or the Office of Government Procurement as appropriate.

Article 62 and 51 of Regulation 809/2014 set out that the Technical Assistance budget is subject to administrative and on-the-post checks. In this regard, expenditure will be subject to examination by the DAFM Internal Audit Unit.

The outputs of the Technical Assistance budget will also be monitored by reference to particular performance indicators, including

- the number of networking events supported by the National Rural Network.
- number of reports and evaluative studies produced by the National Rural Network
- Number of reports and evaluative studies presented for discussion to the Monitoring Committee
- Number of meetings of the Monitoring Committee held
- Number of stakeholder groups attending Monitoring Committee Meetings
- Number of stakeholder groups attached to the National Rural Network
- Number of stakeholder groups attending National Rural Network events
- The number of farmers matched up with trained advisors under Measure 2 by the administrative support service.

Further specific indicators will form part of the intervention logic and annual work plans for the National Rural Network.

15.6.1 National Rural Network

The purpose of the National Rural Network is to assist the efficient and effective implementation of the Rural Development Programme and to promote synergies across measures.

Since there is a significant degree of experience at local level in delivery of rural programming both on and off-farm, a significant focus of the network will be to secure and co-ordinate the flow of information, including performance indicators, between local beneficiaries, intermediate bodies and the Managing Authority.

A tender document for the network will be prepared on foot of these recommendations in 2015 and will issue following consultation with the European Commission. It is envisaged that a NRN will be in place by the end of 2015.

The network infrastructure will be provided by an external body selected by a public competitive tendering process. Further details in relation to the work of the NRN are set out in Section 17.

16. LIST OF ACTIONS TO INVOLVE PARTNERS

16.1. Action A - The Consultative Committee on the CAP towards 2020 was chaired by the Department between 2010 and 2013.

16.1.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

An initial consultation process was launched with stakeholders in July 2009 to obtain views on what EU agriculture policies would serve Ireland and the EU best in the years to come. Over 60 submissions were received under this process and these submissions related to general CAP issues. The responses received helped to inform Ireland's position in the negotiations on the future of the CAP after 2013.

In 2010, a Consultative Committee on the CAP after 2013 was set up by the Department with a view to obtaining the views of all stakeholders on the CAP reform proposals. The Committee comprised all the major farming and agriculture related representative organisations involved in Social Partnership as well as a number of academics and environmental interests. The Committee met on several occasions throughout the CAP negotiations. It also participated in the Stakeholder events organised during the visits of Commissioner Ciolos in 2010 and again in January 2012.

16.1.2. Summary of the results

The responses received and the expert input to the Consultative Committee helped to inform Ireland's position in the negotiations on the future of the CAP after 2013.

16.2. Action B - In April 2010, members of the Coordination Committee for the European Network for Rural Development were invited to launch a debate on CAP, specific to Pillar II.

16.2.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

In response to this ENRD debate, members of the Monitoring Committee of Ireland's RDP, members of the Coordination Committee for Ireland's National Rural Network and all those who had made submissions to Ireland's earlier general consultation process, were invited to make submissions specific to the Rural Development aspects of CAP. Invitations for submissions were also extended to attendees at CAP consultative committees and other RD communication events.

In respect of the Pillar II specific consultation a total of 14 submissions were received from a variety of organisations including farming organisations, professional representative bodies, and research institutions amongst others.

This pre-dated the publication of the draft rural development regulation so this meant that submissions received were of a quite general nature.

16.2.2. Summary of the results

The main broad themes emerging from the consultation process were:

- A strong rural development policy into the future
- Eliminate rigidity in spending requirements
- Rural development policy should have a fixed budget and not depend on modulation
- Administration of Rural development policy/measures needs to be simplified
- There is across the board support for environmental measures
- Emphasis should be placed on investment, restructuring and innovation
- Employment in rural areas should be prioritised
- Bottom up localised delivery under LEADER measures should be enhanced
- Animal welfare measures should be promoted

16.3. Action C - In Autumn 2012, a comprehensive list of partners and stakeholders was compiled by the Managing Authority. In December 2012, written submissions were invited from these stakeholders and also from the general public.

16.3.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

The list of stakeholders was based on Article 5 of the draft Common Provisions regulation concerning Partnership at the time. Therefore the following partners were involved:

- competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities;
- economic and social partners; and
- bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, nongovernmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination.

16.3.2. Summary of the results

Some 90 written submissions were received from interested stakeholders and members of the public.[1] These submissions were from a broad mix of interested parties including farming organisations, environmental and social interest groups, business representatives, local and regional authorities and LEADER groups and individuals.

These submissions were very important in terms of identifying areas where investment might be targeted and thus informing the development of the SWOT analysis and the Needs assessment that were being completed simultaneously. All submissions were carefully analysed by the Managing Authority and provided to the ex ante evaluators and the results fed into the RDP design process.

The areas suggested by stakeholders for investment under the RDP were:

Priority One

- Training – general and bespoke/niche training
- Knowledge Transfer Groups
- European Innovation Partnerships (EIP)

Priority Two

- On farm capital investments including non productive investments
- Young farmers/early retirement
- Farm Partnerships
- Investments in food projects

Priority Three

- Co-operation projects
- Importance of local food
- Producer organisations
- Quality Assurance Schemes

Priority Four

- Agri environment climate
- Natura 2000
- Areas of Natural Constraints
- Other including water quality/uplands/ organics

Priority Five

- Renewable energy/biomass
- Afforestation

- Agro-forestry

Priority Six

- Enterprise and jobs
- Rural tourism
- Broadband
- Food

All submissions were subsequently placed on the website of the Department.

[1] Although deadlines were set for the receipt of submissions, this was for the purposes of planning and it is important to note that late submissions were all accepted, considered and also fed into the process. This was the case for both stages of written consultation.

16.4. Action D - In mid July 2013, a one day stakeholder workshop was held in Portlaoise for some 90 participants including many of those that had provided submissions under the first phase.

16.4.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

The stakeholder workshop was hosted by the National Rural Network in close co-operation with the Managing Authority. The NRN, having agreed a potential representative attendance list with the Managing Authority, invited participants to take part and arranged for six different independent Chairmen, with expertise in the level of each priority.

To begin there was a plenary session in which partners were informed about the state of play in relation to the rural development regulation at the end of the Irish Presidency of the EU. There were also presentations setting out an overview of the initial results of the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment and the results of the initial phase of consultation.

At that point in time the SWOT had been developed taking into account internal expertise, a wide range of research reports and publications by the Department, Teagasc and others, the results of the initial stakeholder consultation and feedback from the NRN and the ex ante evaluators.

In advance of the workshop, participants had been split into six different break- out groups to discuss both the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment at the level of each priority. These groups took place after the

plenary session had ended. Each group had an independent chairman to convene the discussion and the groups were limited to a maximum number of 18 participants. These small groups enabled a productive level of engagement, and a rapporteur fed back the results from each of the individual groups to the plenary session at the end. There followed a short general questions and answers session and conclusions, chaired by the Managing Authority.

16.4.2. Summary of the results

As a result of the very practical and constructive feedback received from stakeholders on the draft overview of the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment, various amendments were made to these documents.

Some of the main changes to the SWOT included the addition of text relating to for example:

- Beef and sheep farmers in relation to non-economically viable farms.
- The ending of milk quotas in 2015
- Rising input costs as a threat to competitiveness
- Traceability – Ireland's place in food production
- Distance from market and business transport costs; Seasonal cash flow problems
- Potential for Knowledge Transfer Groups to encompass higher overall numbers and also to expand to other areas
- Issues with addressing biodiversity loss and water quality in sensitive areas
- Specific reference to trailing shoe technology
- Rising fossil fuel and energy costs
- The use of networks and targeted training to make information available re LEADER

As can be seen these additions were across the range of priorities and these also covered strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

In relation to the needs assessment a range of additional needs were identified or the existing needs were further developed/elaborated, for example:

- Greater participation in knowledge transfer groups
- Supporting collaboration to improve competitiveness
- Monitoring the contribution of the measures in meeting Ireland's objectives under environmental policies/strategies
- Insulation techniques and improvements in efficiency of heating systems and techniques
- Importance of specifically targeted training

As can be seen, these needs covered the broad range of priorities and focus areas. Stakeholder feedback

along these lines thus directly impacted on the development of the SWOT and needs analyses at the time.

16.5. Action E - In July 2013 the Minister initiated a process of consultation with all relevant stakeholders to ascertain their views on the most appropriate application of the Pillar1 Regulation in light of Ireland's unique agricultural profile & circumstances

16.5.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

Although this was not specifically related to the RDP, there are clear links given the integrated nature of Ireland's approach to implementing CAP supports across Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. For example, various issues were raised, such as young farmers and collaborative farming arrangements that are appropriate to both pillars. This process also resulted in various additional submissions being received in relation to Pillar 2.

A total of 47 submissions were received from a wide range of interested parties prior to the closing date in September 2013. These submissions answered the set of 44 questions that had been asked in the consultation document.

16.5.2. Summary of the results

The submissions were divided into the following groups and the main themes emerging can be summarised as follows:

Farming Organisations - the main farming organisations generally wished to maintain the status quo and preferred the basic model of convergence. There were some different views as to whether coupled support should be implemented and, if so, what form it should take.

Specialist Representative Groups - groups representing the processing of agricultural products wished to target payments at active farmers/producers. They preferred the basic model of convergence and the application of mandatory schemes only. On the other hand, the environmental groups wished to use environmental and ecological criteria as the basis for distributing funds. These groups favoured less intensive small farmers and looked for the implementation of significant convergence and of those schemes which would move funds to smaller farmers in disadvantaged areas

Groups for Specific Geographical Areas (primarily based in western and northern counties) - looked for a significant redistribution of funds through high convergence thresholds and capping of payments per hectare as well as the implementation of those schemes which would favour these counties including Areas

of Natural Constraints and Small Farmers Schemes.

Private Individuals - related primarily to their individual circumstances. The issue of those who, for a variety of reasons, held very low value entitlements arising from the reference period but who subsequently increased production also featured.

16.6. Action F - In mid January 2014, another stage of consultation was launched in the form of the draft RDP 2014-2020 Consultation document.

16.6.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

By this stage a wide range of preparatory work had been completed by the Department on CAP as a whole taking into account the previous stages of consultation. In mid January 2014 the Taoiseach and the Minister for Agriculture made major announcements in relation to overall CAP funding concerning both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2.[1]

The announcements were accompanied by significant press coverage across various media.

In terms of the RDP, the overall expected level of funding was announced at some €4 billion. 7% of the EU allocation was confirmed for LEADER and matching National Exchequer funding to supplement the €2.037 billion Department of Agriculture EU allocation was confirmed.

The RDP 2014-2020 consultation document was simultaneously published on the website of DAFM. The consultation paper itself set out the primary areas envisaged for funding in the RDP and a broad outline of these proposed measures. The potential measures were grouped as follows:

1. Agri-environment climate measures
2. Areas of Natural Constraints
3. On Farm Capital Investments
4. Knowledge Transfer measures
5. Support for collaborative and quality focussed measures
6. Targeted support
7. LEADER

At the same time advertisements were placed in the national press, the main Farming newspaper and also on the website of the Department.

Written submissions were sought from interested stakeholders and the public on the draft consultation

document at this stage. A period of 4 weeks was provided for the receipt of written submissions, although late submissions were also accepted.

[1]
<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/ruralenvironment/ruraldevelopment/ruraldevelopmentprogramme2014-2020/ConsultationDocumentRDP24Jan2014.pdf>

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/press/pressreleases/2014/january/title,73336,en.html>

16.6.2. Summary of the results

In the ten week period following the publication of the consultation document on the website it had been accessed approximately 1,000 times.

Over 130 written submissions were received from interested stakeholders and members of the public. All submissions were carefully analysed and summarised by the Managing Authority. They were also provided to the ex ante evaluators for their consideration.

The findings emerging from the process were circulated to relevant implementing divisions in the Department and a selection of relevant submissions were provided to other staff in the Department as appropriate and requested.

The results of this work fed into the RDP design process, with a particular focus on any technical suggestions such as rates of pay, structure of schemes and suggested focus for measures. In this regard the second phase of written submissions (during 2014) was quite different to the initial phase (during 2013). The second phase was more specific, particularly as stakeholders had a consultation document on which to focus, compared to the first phase, which was more general in nature. Both phases informed the overall process.

All submissions were subsequently placed on the website of the Department

16.7. Action G - Two weeks after the launch of the consultation document, a consultation event was held for stakeholders in the Department's Backweston campus.

16.7.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

The RDP 2014-2020 consultation document referred to above was the main subject of this consultation event.

The Managing Authority gave a detailed presentation outlining the:

- The new Rural Development Regulation and the policy framework
- Steps taken to date in designing the new RDP
- Proposed measure outlines
- Next steps

A detailed Questions and Answers session followed, focused on the areas of proposed support

16.7.2. Summary of the results

This event came at a very practical time at the end of January 2014 between the launch of the consultation document and the deadline for the receipt of written submissions. Broadly speaking the RDP consultation document was well received by stakeholders.

Around 100 participants including, for example, representatives from farming organisations, environmental groups, Government bodies, local and regional authorities and LEADER groups were in attendance.

A wide range of participants from the Department, in particular staff responsible for measure design, were present. A range of suggestions for measure design emerged from this process and fed into the ongoing RDP preparation process.

16.8. Action H - In January 2014, a focussed one day stakeholder workshop on the LEADER element of the RDP 2014-2020 was held in the Custom House Dublin for 30 participants.

16.8.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

The stakeholder workshop was hosted by the Department of Environment, Community and Local

Government.

The aim of this consultation exercise was to receive feedback on the potential content of the LEADER element of the RDP 2014-20 from individuals and organisations that are actively involved in areas that have a direct impact on the development of rural Ireland.

There were presentations given and a series of questions posed to initiate the workshops. The themes of the workshops were “Enterprise Support and Job Creation” and “Local Development”.

16.8.2. Summary of the results

General ideas emerged around which the LDS development process can be focused. A number of strong themes emerged where participants felt LEADER interventions should focus including;

- Rural Economic Development/Enterprise Support and Job Creation including in areas such as Rural Tourism
- Social Inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation
- Rural Environment

These themes were used to feed into the design of the new Rural Development Programme.

16.9. Action I - In February 2014, a one day public consultation event on the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 was held in Tullamore.

16.9.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

The open consultation was hosted by DECLG. Notice of the event was published on the DECLG website and stakeholders were encouraged to publicise the consultation. There were approximately 200 attendees.

The aim of this consultation exercise was to receive feedback on the potential content of the LEADER element of the RDP 2014-2020 from individuals and organisations actively involved in areas that have a direct impact on the development of rural Ireland.

Presentations were given by DECLG, Teagasc and CORE (Community enterprise in the craft sector.)

There was an open discussion and also an invitation to send LEADER specific written submissions to DECLG for consideration.

16.9.2. Summary of the results

Approximately 20 written submissions were received from interested stakeholders and members of the public.

These submissions were from a broad mix of interested parties including representative farm associations, environmental and social interest groups, LEADER groups and community groups.

The themes in the submissions were used to feed into the design of the new programme and will be used to inform the Local Development Strategy development process. As a follow up to this, DECLG also intends to invite submissions on the LEADER element of the RDP in early July, 2014.

16.10. Action J - Over the course of 2013 and 2014 there were ongoing bilateral meetings with a wide range of stakeholder groups including farming bodies, environmental groups, professional representative bodies, government departments and public bodies.

16.10.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

To the greatest extent possible the Managing Authority has facilitated any requests for meetings in relation to the preparation of the RDP. Implementing divisions and those responsible for measure design also have had their own specific meetings with relevant organisations and partners, and these will continue into the RDP implementation phase.

Although all meetings tended to cover a wide range of issues and cross cutting themes, the main subject of these meetings was dependent on the organisation involved and the agenda for any specific meetings. A selection of topics addressed at meetings is highlighted below:

- Agri-environment climate measures
- Knowledge transfer issues
- Dairy, EIP and innovation

- Monitoring, indicators and Evaluation Plan
- Potential for Article 35 measure on co-operation
- On farm capital investments
- Investments and agri-environment issues
- Issues relating to island farming
- LEADER, co-operation and CLLD
- Young farmers
- Heritage issues within agri-environment schemes
- Agri-environment climate measures, biodiversity, habitats and species
- Potential for an uplands scheme

16.10.2. Summary of the results

This series of meetings has proved to be very productive. As noted already different groups had different levels of expertise in various areas. However, all stakeholders showed a high level of interest in the RDP and were keen to put forward their views and proposals on a range of topics. The meetings enabled partners and stakeholders to get updates in relation to the state of play in terms of RDP preparation, and provided the opportunity to engage with the Managing Authority and other staff from DAFM.

These meetings were most useful to the Managing Authority. Detailed and specific expertise from the various partners concerned was vital in terms of informing the development of specific measures. Although it is not possible to summarise all the input received some key examples are highlighted below.

- A number of bodies were able to assist in terms of identifying the main priorities for on-farm capital investments.
- Representative organisations were able to assist in the identification of practical issues with implementation of a range of measures including agri-environment and knowledge transfer measures
- Various environment groups (both governmental and non-governmental) provided technical expertise in relation to the agri-environment climate measures. This includes, but is not limited to, identification of species and habitats that should be targeted in specific parts of the GLAS scheme and specific details in relation to locally led agri- environment schemes.

16.11. Action K - Miscellaneous actions

16.11.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

Miscellaneous actions including: presentations at conferences, parliamentary engagement, updates to the farming press and direct dealings with members of the public.

16.11.2. Summary of the results

During 2013 and 2014 there has been a wide range of various actions to involve partners at different stages of the RDP preparation process.

- The Managing Authority and/or other DAFM staff have given presentations on the RDP preparations to various conferences and events.
- A large number of parliamentary questions have been answered in relation to the preparation of the RDP.
- The Department has updated the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture Food and the Marine on the state of play in relation to the RDP on various occasions.
- A large number of Ministerial representations have been answered in relation to the preparation of the RDP.

16.12. Action L - Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Consultation

16.12.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

In line with the National legislation (S.I. No 453 of 2004) in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a four week period was provided for public consultation on the draft environmental report and a number of draft chapters of Ireland's RDP. Following on from a press launch, there was significant press coverage across various media and the relevant documents were placed on the Department's website and written submissions were invited.

16.12.2. Summary of the results

Some 40 submissions were received, focusing on the environmental assessment of the draft RDP. The findings from this process fed back into the SEA work undertaken by the independent consultants. In addition, where relevant, submissions were fed back into the measure design process. The feedback received included that from the general public and bodies active both in the realm of nature protection and of wider rural development. In order to ensure that this feedback fed directly into the SEA and RDP design process, an analysis of all submissions received was undertaken by the Managing Authority to identify the key issues emerging. This analysis, as well as full submissions where appropriate, was provided both to the consultants undertaking the SEA and line divisions designing and implementing particular measures. In particular, some of the key issues highlighted in this process which have been reflected in the SEA and measure design include the importance of addressing PAF issues via Measure 10, an expanded approach to the local, targeted agri-environment approach, the possibility of EIPs addressing environmental issues, and the identification of certain priority species.

16.13. Action M – September 2014 Involvement of the 2007-2013 RDP Monitoring Committee

16.13.1. Subject of the corresponding consultation

A meeting of the 2007-2013 RDP Monitoring Committee was convened in September 2014. While this meeting addressed matters relating to the ongoing management of the 2007-2013 RDP, the agenda also included an update in relation to the design of the 2014-2020 RDP and the implementation structures to be put in place.

16.13.2. Summary of the results

At the September 2014 meeting of the 2007-2013 RDP Monitoring Committee, an update was provided to members of the Committee in relation to the 2014-2020 RDP. The stakeholders raised a number of issues in relation to measure design and implementation which were fed back into the RDP design process. In addition, the Managing Authority also outlined the current position in relation to the establishment of a Monitoring Committee and a National Rural Network for the new RDP. Some suggestions in relation to the membership of the Monitoring Committee were offered by stakeholders, and these will be reflected in Committee's membership.

16.14. (Optional) explanations or additional information to complement the list of actions

The above actions represent a comprehensive and integrated approach to the involvement of partners in the development of the RDP. The process put in place ensured that the involvement of partners included the issues foreseen in Article 8 of the European Code of Conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds.

17. NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK

17.1. The procedure and the timetable for establishing the National Rural Network (hereinafter NRN)

The NRN has a very important role in improving the quality of rural development programmes by increasing the involvement of stakeholders in the governance of rural development as well as informing the broader public of its benefits. The Irish Managing Authority's goal is to have a NRN operational as soon as possible after approval of the RDP, but at the latest before the end of 2015.

The Irish NRN will be supported by a Network Support Unit (NSU), which will be established outside of but will be managed by the Managing Authority (MA). The NRN will be selected by a competitive tendering process. Respecting both EU and national Public Procurement rules, a tender document will be prepared and issued. All selection procedures will be open and transparent.

The tender document will include reference to all requirements cited in the relevant regulations. In addition, the tender will outline particular tasks for the NRN which take cognisance of the key themes from the preparatory analysis for the RDP and which draw on the experience of the previous programming period.

17.2. The planned organisation of the network, namely the way organisations and administrations involved in rural development, including the partners, as referred to in Article 54(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 will be involved and how the networking activities will be facilitated

The NRN will have the following structure: -

- The Managing Authority will have overall management responsibility for the NRN and NSU
- A steering Group will be set up to oversee the delivery of the Network Action Plan and will consist of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, and the NSU. It is envisaged that the Group will meet quarterly in the first year of operation and thereafter as necessary.
- The NSU is the permanent secretariat set up to manage the network and will be responsible for establishing the structures needed to run the network.
- Thematic Groups or subcommittees will be formed in order to address specific issues. It is intended that these issues will be reflective of the themes and challenges which emerged in the design of the RDP and also of issues which may arise over the course of the programming period.
- A LEADER sub-committee will be chaired by DECLG as the delegated Paying Agency for LEADER. This committee will be tasked with providing support in relation to LEADER-specific issues and the dissemination of best practice
- It is also envisaged that the NRN will provide a networking outlet for EIP operational groups.

NRN Action Plan

The NRN Action Plan will be based on the aims of the NRN as set out in the relevant regulations. To ensure that the activities of the NRN are strategically focused, the drafting of the Action Plan will take cognisance of the preparatory analyses underlying the development of this RDP. It is also important that the NRN is sufficiently flexible to address and adapt to new issues and challenges which may emerge over the lifetime of the RDP. Accordingly, the Action Plan for the NRN will be based on one year cycles.

NRN Membership

Effective networking is based on inclusiveness, openness, active engagement by the NSU and continuity of actions. Membership of Ireland's network will be based on partnership principles and will be member driven. It will be open to all organisations and administrations involved in rural development. There will not be a formal process to gain membership. However, in accordance with the regulations, some groups, such as those involved in the Partnership Agreement and the Monitoring Committee will be invited to join. A wide membership of the NRN will be encouraged through promotion and publicising of the network through various social and more traditional media.

NSU requirements

In order to efficiently facilitate the networking processes, particular skills, qualifications and other requirements will be elaborated in the tender document. Any organisation tendering will be required to demonstrate that they will be sufficiently resourced to provide the required standard of service. While these requirements will be developed more fully as part of the tendering process, some of the key requirements for the NSU will include:

- technical resources to deliver a fully functional and efficient network
- information technology expertise
- contacts with the European Network for Rural Development, other rural development networks, research institutes, resource centres and political spheres to enable a horizontal approach to the network
- a wide range of competencies in order to establish, maintain and promote the NRN.

17.3. A summary description of the main categories of activity to be undertaken by the NRN in accordance with the objectives of the programme

All regulatory obligations will be laid down in the Action Plan, which must ensure continuity of the activities and at the same time flexibility to respond to changing needs throughout the whole programming period. It is envisaged that the Action Plan will include the following activities:

- Collation and dissemination of examples of best practice projects covering all priorities of the RDP to help

in identifying and analysing good transferable practices

- Facilitation of thematic and analytical exchanges between stakeholders to support the sharing and dissemination of findings

- Training and networking for LAGs and in particular technical assistance for inter-territorial and transnational co-operation, facilitating co-operation among LAGs.

- Networking for advisors and innovation support services.

- Sharing and disseminating of monitoring and evaluation findings.

- Drawing up a communication plan including publicity and information concerning the RDP in agreement with the Managing Authority.

- Cooperating with the ENRD and EIP by participating at meetings and exchanges at EU level.

- Engagement with possible cross-fertilisation with projects funded under LIFE, with a particular focus on collaborating with networks established under LIFE to disseminate best practice.

17.4. Resources available for establishing and operating the NRN

The setting up and operation of the NRN will be financed from the technical assistance budget. Appropriate budgetary resources will be available to the NRN, in line with the requirements in the regulations, split between running, administrative and capital costs; the exact amount will be formulated as part of the tender process.

Other resource requirements include a strong ICT capacity in order to ensure the development and operation of a suitable website and online project database. It is important for the NSU to have sufficient permanent staff complemented with non-permanent experts to be able to perform the tasks set for the network. They must have capacity for international liaison and flexibility to adjust to arising needs and ongoing developments during the implementation of the RDP.

18. EX-ANTE ASSESSMENT OF VERIFIABILITY, CONTROLLABILITY AND ERROR RISK

18.1. Statement by the Managing Authority and the Paying Agency on the verifiability and controllability of the measures supported under the RDP

The need to ensure verifiability and controllability of measures has been integrated into the measure design process. At individual measure and scheme level, the appropriate administrative and technical expertise has been utilised to address this issue. A particular issue is that experience of previous programming rounds has been utilised to ensure that control and verification procedures have been central to the process. In addition, this is an issue that has been coordinated via the Central Coordinating Group which oversaw the development of this RDP.

In addition, the MA and PA separately assessed the verifiability and controllability and control procedures in place for each scheme. The results of this assessment are outlined in the relevant table in each measure description in chapter 8. The result of this assessment is that the MA and PA are satisfied with the procedures in place.

As part of this process, a review was undertaken of previous RDP schemes and relevant audits to ensure that lessons from previous programming periods are taken into account in the new period. The results of this process are set out in the table attached as an annex which references the main findings and associated lessons of the new programming period.

Statement

The MA and PA have examined the costs associated with each Measure of the RDP as the design process has progressed. We are satisfied with the verification and control procedures in place and that the costings are appropriate and address any issue of double funding as appropriate

Fintan O'Brien

Heber McMahon

Head of Division,

Head of Division

EAFRD Managing Authority

EAFRD Paying Agency

18.2. Statement by the functionally independent body from the authorities responsible for the programme implementation confirming the adequacy and accuracy of the calculations of standard costs, additional costs and income forgone

Independent Verification of Costings

Independent Role and Expertise

Teagasc carried out the independent verification of costings for Measure 1, Measure 2, Measure 4, Measure 7, Measure 10, Measure 11, Measure 13 and Measure 16.

Teagasc is the semi-state body with responsibility for providing agricultural research, advice and training in Ireland. In these roles it carries out a significant research programme in the areas of Agriculture, Environment, Food, Rural Economy and Development to support the development of the agriculture and food industries and rural communities. It also supports the development needs of a high proportion of the farming community through its advisory and training services. Teagasc is functionally independent from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, which calculated the costings at issue here.

Teagasc has considerable expertise and experience in relation to assessing the financial impact of policy measures at farm level. From a research perspective two key long term research projects provide much of the basis for this expertise, namely:

- The National Farm Survey, completed annually to meet the needs of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) and the national requirements of policy makers and those involved in the industry to have a comprehensive assessment of the financial and technical performance on Irish farms.
- FAPRI-Ireland – This project provides detailed independent assessment of the impact of policy interventions on Irish (and European) agriculture.

Teagasc also has in place a CAP RDP Working Group. This working group brings together expertise within Teagasc across all areas of policy and activity of relevance.

The Teagasc Advisory service has considerable experience in supporting farmers in their decisions through the provision of detailed financial assessment and advice. It also produces detailed financial guidelines on an annual basis for farmers and those working on their behalf.

Qualifications and Expertise of the Reviewer

The assessment of costs was carried out by the Head of the Rural Economy and Development Programme, who chairs the organisation's CAP Rural Development Programme Working Group. He holds the following qualifications: BSc (Mathematics and Statistics, NUI), MSc (Applied Statistics, Oxford), MA (Economics, NUI), PhD (Economics of Public Policy, LSE), MBA.

He has over 20 years professional experience in the area of policy evaluation, including 9 years experience of strategic oversight of a programme area within Teagasc.

Examination of Calculations

In carrying out this assessment, the reviewer, together with members of the CAP RDP Working Group examined the documentation provided and, where necessary, sought clarification from responsible officials in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine on the measures involved. He and colleagues also sought and received detailed background costings on the measures so as to have a better understanding of the specific actions specified under the measure and the economic justification of the proposed payments. They discussed and sought clarification on many of the issues with research and advisory colleagues with specific expertise in the enterprises/issues so as to arrive at a conclusion as to the accuracy and adequacy of the calculations involved.

Statement

The Teagasc CAP RDP Working Group has examined the costs associated with each relevant Measure of the RDP as the design process has progressed. We are satisfied that the costings are appropriate and address any issue of double funding as appropriate.

Prof Cathal O'Donoghue

Head of Teagasc Rural Economy and Development Programme

Teagasc Mellows Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway

For Knowledge Transfer Groups under Measure 1, all costings are based on the eligible knowledge transfer actions carried out by both facilitators (scheme beneficiaries) and participating farmers. They are based on the standard cost approach and have been independently verified by Dr James Kinsella BAgrSc, MAgrSc, PhD of University College Dublin School of Agriculture & Food Science.

19. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

19.1. Description of the transitional conditions by measure

Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 featured three highly successful and popular measures, namely; M212 the Less Favoured Areas Scheme (LFAs), M214 the Rural Environment Protection scheme (REPS) and M213 Natura 2000 linked to the REPS scheme.

Following on from the Health Check of the CAP in 2009, two further schemes were launched in 2010 in order to address the so-called "new challenges" of renewable energy, biodiversity, water management, climate change mitigation, dairy restructuring and broadband. The schemes launched were a further Agri Environment scheme known as the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) (incorporating M216 Investments linked to AEOS) and a second Natura 2000 scheme linked to AEOS.

Funding for the Measures 212, 213, 214 and 216 was exhausted by 1st January 2014 and the schemes are subsequently funded under Article 3(1)a of the Transitional Regulation 1310/2013 until the end of 2015. Funding under this Article is expected to amount to some €311m. Other than for LFAs, which is an annual scheme, no further new commitments were undertaken in 2014 for these measures; only ongoing commitments were paid.

Ongoing Agri-environment commitments from the previous programming period to which revisions pursuant to Article 46 of Regulation (EC) 1974/2006 apply will be revised accordingly in 2015. In addition, a number of schemes from the previous programme will have continuing commitments in the new programming period after 2015. As provided for under Article 3(1)b of the Transitional Regulation 1310/2013, these schemes can also be funded from the 2014-2020 allocation. The schemes include M113 the Early Retirement Scheme (ERS), M121 the Target Agricultural Modernisation Scheme, M213 AEOS Natura & M214 AEOS (incl. M216). Funding under this provision is expected to amount to some €67.15m. It is expected that this money will be fully utilised by 2019.

This brings the total transitional expenditure to €378.15m EU contribution. The total transitional expenditure is detailed in the table below. The new co-financing rates will be used for M212, 213, 214 & 216 from the beginning of 2014, and for all remaining transitional expenditure post 2015. These co-financing rates will be as laid down in the Financial Plan Chapter. The default rate of 53% will be used for M113 Early Retirement as no corresponding measure exists. All transitional operations ongoing from the previous programming period will be clearly identifiable from new measures in all aspects including budgetary, management and control systems.

19.2. Indicative carry-over table

Measures	Total Union Contribution planned 2014-2020 (€)
M01 - Knowledge transfer and information actions (art 14)	0.00
M02 - Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services (art 15)	0.00

M04 - Investments in physical assets (art 17)	22,000,000.00
M07 - Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (art 20)	0.00
M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28)	209,308,000.00
M11 - Organic farming (art 29)	0.00
M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30)	46,250,000.00
M13 - Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (art 31)	103,000,000.00
M16 - Co-operation (art 35)	0.00
M19 - Support for LEADER local development (CLLD – community-led local development) (art 35 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)	0.00
M20 - Technical assistance Member States (art 51-54)	0.00
M113 - Early retirement	4,880,000.00
M131 - Meeting standards based on Community legislation	0.00
M341 - Skills acquisition, animation and implementation	0.00
Total	385,438,000.00

20. THEMATIC SUB-PROGRAMMES

Thematic sub-programme name

21. DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Checksum	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Strategic Environmental Assessment of RDP 2014 - 2020	3 Ex-ante evaluation report - annex	13-04-2015			3945996293	Strategic Environmental Assessment of RDP 2014 - 2020	13-04-2015	nmeleama
Section 18 - Audit Table Annex	18 Ex-ante assessment of verifiability, controllability... - annex	13-04-2015			1943940207	Section 18 - Audit Table Annex	13-04-2015	nmeleama
GLAS Specification	8.2 M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28) - annex	13-04-2015			508465466	GLAS Specification	13-04-2015	nmeleama
Island DED Codes and Townland Names	8.2 M12 - Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive payments (art 30) - annex	13-04-2015			526700036	Island DED Codes and Townland Names	13-04-2015	nmeleama
Ex Ante Evaluation of RDP 2014-2020	3 Ex-ante evaluation report - annex	13-04-2015			3856201263	Ex Ante Evaluation of RDP 2014-2020	13-04-2015	nmeleama
Thematic Table of GLAS Commitments	8.2 M10 - Agri-environment-climate (art 28) - annex	13-04-2015			4007325411	Thematic Table of GLAS Commitments	13-04-2015	nmeleama



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR IRELAND 2014-2020

**PREPARED ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND THE MARINE
By David Kelly, M.Env.Sc**

MAY 2014

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Following on from the entering into force of the EU Regulation No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), (hereafter the Rural Development Regulation), the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is currently preparing Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the period 2014-2020. The Programme is to cover the period 2014 –2020 and will replace the current outgoing RDP for 2007-2013.

A total fund of €3.94bn will be available over the lifetime of the new RDP for the measures to be delivered via the Department. The allocation of funding will be phased over the 2014-2020 period in line with the requirements of measure design and budgetary requirements. The detail of the Programme as regards the range of measures, their objectives and means of implementation set out in the RDP 2014-2020 have all been formulated in the light of the performance and experience of the outgoing 2007-2013 RDP.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

As the proposed RDP is an EU co-financed Programme prepared in respect of agriculture, and also has a potential for significant environmental effects, it has been deemed to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the EU SEA Directive.

In brief SEA consists firstly of preparing an Environmental Report (ER). The ER is a systematic evaluation of the likely environmental implications of the various elements of the proposed Programme on a comprehensive range of environmental receptors specified in the Directive/Regulations. It is not an analysis of the effectiveness or merits of the RDP itself.

A key aspect of the ER is that it is an overarching document that takes a strategic overview of the Programme and as such is positioned at the top of a hierarchy of themes and requirements as are to be applied at a Programme implementation level. The findings of the ER feed into the Programme development process such that any adverse environmental implications can be avoided from the outset, the impacts mitigated or alternative approaches adopted. This process includes a requirement for public consultation in advance of adoption of the Programme.

Pre-consultation regarding the Programme was undertaken with the wide range of stakeholders nationally and, in the case of the scope of the ER, the various statutory consultees were also consulted (namely the Environmental Protection Agency, the Minister and Department for the Environment, Community & Local Government, the Minister and Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; and the Minister and Department for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

Given the very broad range of the draft RDP measures and their potential to interact with virtually all environmental receptors of note it was determined that each RDP measure should be examined for its potential impacts on the environment. Therefore no measures were "Scoped out" in advance of preparing the ER.

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

It should be noted that where state sponsored Plans/Programmes can potentially impact on designated areas for conservation an “Appropriate Assessment” under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations S.I. 447 of 2011 must also be carried out. Such an Assessment is currently being finalised within a separate parallel process to that of SEA. Importantly, the most recent draft of that assessment concludes that: “The RDP 2014-2020 as adopted will not have any significant impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 (protected habitat) sites”

DRAFT RDP MEASURES

There is a range of measures proposed for the RDP. Varying levels of funding is to be allocated to each. While the final grouping may change, as may the level of financial support, this does not affect the assessment of the likely impacts to any notable degree. The RDP measures come under the following headings:

- Agri-Environment and Climate Measures;
- Areas of Natural Constraint;
- On Farm Capital Investments;
- Knowledge Transfer Measures;
- Collaborative and Quality Focused Measures;
- Targeted Support -Beef Data and Genomics Programme;
- LEADER.

STATE OF THE IRISH ENVIRONMENT

As the above measures of the RDP are to be implemented within and across a wide range of rural environments the current state of the environment as regards water quality, climate change etc. forms the backdrop in which the RDP is to be set and with which it will interact.

The current state of Ireland’s environment, including environmental trends/evolution, is comprehensively described in the most recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication: the “State of the Environment Report- Ireland’s Environment” 2012. (Additional, more recent detailed data, is available on protected habitats and species from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG). This is more relevant to the Appropriate Assessment.) The EPA State of the Environment report, the fifth such report, presents the most comprehensive information on the quality of Ireland’s environment. The principal, environmental media of relevance addressed in that report are as follows.

Water

The quality of Ireland’s rivers, transitional water bodies and coastal waters is considered to be comparatively good compared to that of Europe overall. Nonetheless, water pollution problems do exist in Ireland and these are associated with both point sources such as municipal sewage treatment and with diffuse sources such as agriculture. Against this background meeting the Environmental Protection Objectives (stringent water quality targets) set out in the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) will prove challenging. The protection of groundwater, an important natural resource, is also a priority.

Land and Soil

While Ireland has experienced a relatively high rate of land use change since the 1990s, the soils (other than peatlands) are nonetheless considered to be in good condition. Clearly rural development programmes, such

as the proposed RDP, have land use implications, including implications for maintaining those good soil conditions.

Air Quality and Climate

While air quality in Ireland is, in the main, considered to be good, there are significant challenges relating to transport emissions and Green House Gas Emissions (GHG).

The European Commission Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy by 2050 points to EU-wide GHG emission reduction requirements of up to 80% by 2050. This is a significant requirement particularly for Ireland which, compared to the rest of the EU, has a situation where GHG emissions from agriculture are proportionally higher than for most Member States.

Biodiversity

Ireland's marine and terrestrial environments support a wide variety of species and habitats, many of which are of international importance. However across Europe, including Ireland, biodiversity is in decline. Major causes of decline in Europe are land use, including certain forms of agricultural land use.

Ireland has international and legal obligations to protect biodiversity and these include a commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2020. An important element in the conservation of biodiversity is the creation of protected areas and while good progress has been made in this regard there are still habitats of national importance that require to be designated for protection.

Consumption and Waste

Ireland has achieved its EU waste recycling and recovery targets for many waste streams including electronics/electrical wastes, paper, plastic and glass. In effect, recycling reduces the consumption of materials thereby helping to conserve finite resources such as materials and energy. Ireland has also achieved the first target for diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill as required under the EU Landfill Directive. The development of Bio-Energy has the potential to further assist in reducing the quantities of such wastes going to landfill. Not all wastes can be readily recycled and the availability of future landfill capacity is of concern.

DESCRIPTION OF RDP MEASURES AND ASSOCIATED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

AGRI-ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE MEASURES

The inclusion of Agri-Environment and climate measures is compulsory under the Rural Development Regulation. The proposed measures will deliver overarching benefits in terms of the rural environment whilst addressing the issues of climate change mitigation, water quality and the preservation of priority habitats and species. The proposals under this theme are the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS), the Organic Farming Scheme and the Locally Led Output Based Scheme.

Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

Certain farmlands are restricted in the way agriculture should be conducted due to the necessity to meet obligations and objectives in respect of the protection of the natural habitats and water quality associated with those areas. The proposed new GLAS scheme adopts an integrated approach to achieving these objectives.

GLAS has been designed to contribute to the mitigation of the environmental impacts of agriculture through the delivery of targeted environmental advice and best practice at farm level. The incorporation of core mandatory requirements and the focus on the farmer delivering actions that will provide the most environmental benefit on his/her farm will ensure that the optimum environmental impact is achieved.

The purpose of the measure is to both promote and support ways of using agricultural land that is compatible with:

- the protection and improvement of the environment and achieving water quality, climate change and biodiversity objectives;
- the conservation of high nature value farmed environments both within and outside of designated Natura 2000 sites;
- the use of nutrient management planning in farming practice;
- fostering knowledge transfer in the area of sustainable environmental farming systems.

The proposed minimum contract under GLAS will be 5 years. GLAS will comprise of an integrated measure with payments for Natura sites (under Article 30 of the Regulation) included in the general scheme under specific actions (Farmland Habitat Conservation, Conservation of Bird Species, Uplands Conservation). Additional payments may be made available under GLAS+ for a limited number of farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit.

GLAS will, as is the intention, make a significant and important contribution to the conservation of natural habitats and to the conservation of the floral and faunal species these habitats support. As such the Measures represent the single most important element of the draft RDP as regards the protection of biodiversity. Central to its objective of environmental protection and conservation will be its application supported with the appropriate level of specialist knowledge. The Knowledge Transfer Measure of the RDP will play a key role in this regard.

In common with many other measures, GLAS also has the positive benefit of reducing the likelihood of land abandonment thereby conserving traditional landscapes and retaining the rural population these areas support.

Organic Farming Scheme

The support under this measure aims to encourage farmers to convert from conventional farming methods and to apply organic farming methods thus answering society's demand for the use of environmentally friendly farming practices. The proposal is for a continuity of the general structure and implementation/administration of the existing Organic Farming Scheme which entails an annual area based payment over a 5/7 year period with a higher payment for the initial two year conversion period.

The farming practices that the Organic Farming Scheme promotes contribute to improving soil and water quality, to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and to the improvement of the state of biodiversity e.g. by crop rotation, use of organic fertilisers, improvement to soil organic matter and by no use of synthetic plant protection products or synthetic fertilisers. All of these positive environmental attributes that are an inherent part of organic farming will be supported as a consequence of participation in the Organic Farming Scheme. This promotion of low intensity farming is regarded as benefiting all aspects of the environment.

Locally Led Output Based Scheme

The objective of the measure is to provide a complementary approach to the overall Agri-Environmental effort, one which encourages the development of unique projects designed to respond to specific environmental challenges. Examples include the continuance and expansion of the existing Burren Farming for Conservation Project, and the preservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The resultant environmental impacts can be predicted to be entirely positive.

AREAS OF NATURAL CONSTRAINT

Farmers in Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) face significant handicaps deriving from factors such as remoteness, difficult topography and poor soil conditions. The budget allocation to this measure represents some 35% of the total RDP budget. The stated objectives of this measure are to:

- ensure continued agricultural land use, thereby contributing to the maintenance of a viable rural society;
- maintain the countryside;
- maintain and promote sustainable farming systems, which in particular take account of environmental protection requirements.

Essentially the measure seeks to assist farming to continue in these less productive areas and in a more environmentally sustainable manner. The principal environmental consequence of achieving that objective is the prevention of rural decline and associated land abandonment while at the same time achieving the environmental benefits that low intensity farming can contribute to the diversity of rural landscapes and farmland habitats.

ON-FARM CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II (TAMS II)

The approach taken in the measures is to target particular areas of investment in order to assist farmers to establish or upgrade their facilities in a particular manner. Examples of facilities to be supported include dairy equipment, slurry storage, animal housing and low emission slurry spreading equipment. The grant-aid provided (estimated to be some €395m in total) will ensure that farmers can meet the current challenges of the agriculture sector as well as providing benefits in relation to animal welfare, the environment, reduction of labour costs, climate change and increased efficiency.

Improved farm infrastructure arising from increased capital investment across the range of facilities (e.g. slurry storage and land spreading equipment) has the capacity to yield positive environmental benefits by reducing the risks of accidental pollution and hence serves to protect the natural environment, most notably in the area of water, soil, biodiversity, flora, fauna, air quality and climate.

The benefits of this improved and increased infrastructure will be further reinforced when coupled with the “Knowledge Transfer” elements of the RDP which will assist farmers to be appropriately educated in key environmental matters such as understanding and appreciating the necessity to protect the environment and, secondly, in acquiring the necessary skills in how to achieve that protection at a practical operational level.

Bio-Energy Scheme

The Bio-Energy Scheme provides establishment grants to farmers to grow Miscanthus (a tall bamboo-like grass) and Willow for the production of biomass suitable for use as a renewable source of energy. There is the added benefit of providing an alternative land use and income source for individual farmers, with the potential for additional employment in rural areas as supply chains develop and increasing areas of energy crops are established. Financial support is expected to amount to some €12m in total, with the target of supporting some 500 beneficiaries.

Importantly, the bio-energy scheme has the potential to deliver benefits in the context of climate change through reduction of GHG emissions and through carbon uptake. Secondary environmental benefits include:

- Protection of surface water and groundwater through the greater level of bio-absorption of contaminants originating from farm animals;
- Potentially positive impacts on biodiversity, most notably invertebrates and birds, through the provision of additional types of habitats;
- Positive impacts in maintaining rural populations through locally produced energy;
- Development of a local bio-energy infrastructure that can also utilise biomass that would otherwise arise as a waste thereby helping in the diversion of wastes from landfill.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MEASURES

Increasing the knowledge base in the sector can contribute to increased efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness by addressing knowledge gaps in areas such as financial and risk management, grass management practices and animal health and welfare. Similarly, knowledge transfer in relation to environmental and climate change issues will contribute to the development of a more sustainable sector.

Knowledge transfer to the farming community is to be achieved through the application of a number of activities. These are: the establishment of Knowledge Transfer Groups, European Innovation Partnerships, Continued Professional Development for Advisors and the development of a Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service. It is anticipated that approximately €112m for Knowledge Transfer Measures will be applied over the lifetime of the RDP.

These measures have the potential to make an important contribution to both the efficiency and quality of farming activity in Ireland. While improved efficiency has the potential to increase output, and hence raise the environmental footprint of agriculture overall, its close linkage to environmental knowledge and environmental best practice has the potential to greatly increase the depth and quality of the application of environment protection and enhancement at individual farm level. This can be regarded as a positive impact on the primary environmental receptors of farming activity, namely soil, surface water, ground-water, biodiversity and climate (the latter in the context of GHG emissions).

COLLABORATIVE AND QUALITY FOCUSED MEASURES

Support for collaborative and quality focused measures includes support for: Collaborative Farming, Artisan Food Cooperation and support for Quality Schemes. While the total funding to be allocated under these headings over the lifetime of the RDP has not yet been finalised it is likely to be of the order of €5m.

Support for Collaborative Farming

The overriding objective of this measure is to encourage greater engagement by the farming community with the concept of collaborative farming, and in particular farm partnerships.

The improved work practices, efficiencies and economy of land use that will result from the shared skills, assets and experience should provide some modest environmental benefits in lower transport/fuel use, lower water wastage and more efficient use of electricity.

Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme

The approach proposed here is to provide support for collaborative proposals which seek to improve product quality, enhance relevant skills, and improve market access.

The inherent attraction of artisan foods for customers is that they are regarded as meeting the highest of quality standards and must be produced in a manner that is environmentally acceptable and sustainable.

Regional Product Development Support (to be delivered via LEADER)

Regional Product Development support will work to address specific issues, including quality issues, identified for primary producers in attempting to improve their competitiveness.

Increasingly “quality” is regarded as extending to include aspects such as freedom from residual chemicals, production in an environmentally responsible manner and production with due regard to animal health and welfare. Support for both the Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme and the Quality Schemes can help achieve this outcome. Also, given an appropriate level of emphasis on the verifiable environmental credentials of foods, such as is required for participation in the Bord Bia “Origin Green”, the positive environmental benefits of these measures can be further enhanced.

TARGETED SUPPORTS –BEEF DATA AND GENOMICS PROGRAMME

The aim of this support is to increase the value of the output from the beef sector without increasing herd size. This will be achieved through use of genomics technology. This will facilitate the selection of breeding stock with improved fertility which will result in cattle of better quality, accelerated weight gain and extended grazing capacity.

Thus the increased value of output will be achieved with a reduced suckler herd and less intensive resource inputs than is currently the case. This is predicted to result in a reduction in emissions to the environment, including a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

LEADER

LEADER aims to support the sustainable economic and social development of rural Ireland. It is administered by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). The primary objective is the delivery of a community-led local development approach to rural development, supporting a range of community and enterprise projects and the creation of local sustainable employment. In most instances that employment will be linked to local material assets and resources. This of itself helps to contribute to sustainable development as it is less likely to necessitate the importation of materials, associated transport etc. The creation of locally based employment also avoids employees having to commute long distances to

work. Some projects, in particular those involving physical development or works, will require a formal application to the relevant local authority for planning consent and as such will be subject to appropriate planning and environmental considerations at that time.

INTERACTION WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

Over the course of the environmental assessment of the various RDP measures there were a number of national plans and programmes identified that can potentially have linkages with the RDP. In many respects the RDP now under consideration has been drafted with regard to these Plans and Programmes, such as in the case of the “National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016” in the drafting of the GLAS measure.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS

There are a number of environmental Directives and international agreements that can potentially have linkages with the RDP. The relevance and importance of these is that many set the legal framework of environmental rules and requirements under Irish environmental law and within which rural development takes place. In many respects these statutory rules and requirements serve as an important, and sometimes the primary, “Control Measure” for the proposed RDP 2014-2020.

MONITORING

The implementation of the programme will be the responsibility of DAFM and this responsibility extends to ensuring that the environmental conditions attached to the individual supports are adhered to and that unanticipated adverse impacts do not occur. If any such adverse situations are found to arise the programme is sufficiently flexible to allow these to be promptly addressed.

The necessary environmental monitoring for achieving this objective will be through a combination of pre-specified reporting requirements on the part of the beneficiaries and of on-farm inspections by appropriately qualified DAFM staff. In the case of some programme elements a specific computer based system will be developed and this will serve to ensure that documented recording and monitoring of the relevant environmental aspects occurs on an ongoing basis. Also, in the case of GLAS, it is intended that DAFM will closely liaise with the National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding the monitoring of desired outcomes and impacts.

CONCLUSIONS

The Rural Development Regulation published by the European Commission was formally adopted on the 17th December 2013. Under that regulation it is a clear prerequisite of funding support that the RDP of each Member State take due account of environmental protection and sustainable development... To that end it is apparent from an examination of each measure of Ireland’s draft RDP that these requirements have been addressed in a fully integrated and comprehensive manner. This was achieved at the design stage of the programme, a process which included extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders from the outset.

It is concluded that, when viewed in its totality, the RDP has little potential to result in any adverse environmental consequences of note. To the contrary, the RDP has the potential to make an overall positive contribution to Ireland's environment and to the communities that environment supports.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The draft EU Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), (hereafter the Rural Development Regulation) was originally published by the European Commission in October 2011 and was formally adopted on the 17th December 2013. It requires that Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) be based on 6 Priority Areas for rural development. These priority areas are:

- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation;
- enhancing competitiveness;
- promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy;
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Each priority area includes a series of associated focus areas. Also, addressing these priority areas, RDPs must contribute to the cross cutting themes of innovation, climate change and environment.

In addition to the requirement to address the priority areas and cross cutting themes, the Rural Development Regulation has also set a number of requirements that must be taken into account in designing the new RDP. These are that:

- at least 5% of the EU allocation must be allocated to LEADER;
- at least 30% of EU funding must be allocated to environmental and climate measures; and
- 6% of EU funding will be held back for allocation in 2019 following a performance review to be carried out by the Commission.

Following on from the adoption of the Regulation the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (hereafter referred to as DAFM, or the Department) is currently preparing Ireland's RDP for the period 2014-2020 (hereafter referred to as the RDP or the "Programme"). The Programme, to cover the period 2014 –2020 will follow the current outgoing RDP for 2007-2013.

A total of over €4 billion is available for the new RDP. The proposed allocations for individual measures is set out in Section 3. "Financial Support". The allocation of funding will be phased over the 2014-2020 period in line with the requirements of measure design and budgetary requirements. The RDP applies to the entire territory of the Republic of Ireland.

For clarity and accuracy the descriptions for each of the supports is in many cases directly transcribed from the latest texts on the RDP as provided by the DAFM.

1.2 THE RDP AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

According to Article 2 of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC (commonly referred to as the SEA Directive) programmes co-financed by the European Union fall under the scope of the SEA Directive. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is mandatory for all types of plans and programmes "which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent for projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 2011/92/EU".

Furthermore, as the proposed RDP is a co-financed Programme prepared in respect of agriculture and also has a potential for significant environmental effects, it has been deemed to be subject to SEA. The relevant implementing Regulations in Ireland are: the European Communities (environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes) Regulations, S.I. 435 of 2004 and the Planning and Development (strategic environmental assessment) Regulations, S.I. No. 436 of 2004 and as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and S.I. No. 2001 of 2011.

In brief SEA consists firstly of preparing an Environmental Report (ER). The ER is a systematic evaluation of the likely environmental implications of the various elements of the proposed Programme on a comprehensive range of environmental receptors specified in the Directive/Regulations. A key aspect of the ER is that it is an overarching document that takes a strategic overview of the Programme and as such is positioned at the top of a hierarchy of themes and requirements as are to be applied at a Programme implementation level.

The findings of the ER feed into the Programme development process such that any adverse environmental implications of the Programme can be avoided from the outset, the impacts mitigated or alternative approaches adopted. Mitigation includes monitoring the (environmental) impacts of the Programme over its implementation period. This process includes a requirement for public consultation in advance of adoption of the Programme. The Programme is also subject to an Ex-ante Evaluation and this is currently in preparation.

Drafting of the Rural Development Programme

Work to develop the likely form, content and extent of the proposed RDP for the Republic of Ireland first commenced in 2012, and included an open consultation process initiated by the Department, which invited submissions in response to the EU priorities for new programmes. The draft Programme would be guided and framed in the first instance by the necessity to comply with the priority objectives and supports to be agreed at EU level, all in the context of promoting sustainable rural development throughout the Community.

The detail of the Programme as regards the range of measures, their objectives and means of implementation set out in the RDP 2014-2020 have all been formulated in the light of the performance and experience of the outgoing 2007-2013 RDP.

In preparing the draft Programme proposals, the Department also undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis structured according to the EU priorities. The Department then subjected the emerging SWOT findings to further consultations at stakeholder consultation sessions held at venues in different parts of country.

Consultation on Scope of the Environmental Report (ER)

These consultations were also used as an opportunity to advise the attendees that the RDP was to be subject to SEA and that a formal scoping of the ER content and depth would be undertaken in advance. As required under the SEA Regulations, DAFM notified the statutory consultees, namely the Environmental Protection Agency, the Minister and Department for the Environment, Community & Local Government, the Minister and Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Minister and Department for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht to advise them that a new Rural Development Programme for Ireland was shortly to be prepared and that it was to be subject to SEA.

Since that time a draft Scoping Report on the likely content and depth of the ER has been prepared and submitted to the statutory consultees. Feedback from that consultative process further informed the proposed content of the ER.

The most comprehensive response on scoping was received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The DAHG submission, dated 1st May 2014, makes specific reference to their numerous earlier submissions to DAFM in 2013 and early 2014 regarding their view of the content and approach that they would like to see adopted in the RDP. Those submissions would therefore have been taken into account in the draft RDP that became available at the end of March 2014 and upon which this ER is based. The DAHG submission of 1st May relates to both the ER and to the Appropriate Assessment. The principal points raised by DAHG have been considered in preparing the ER, however, some appear to be overly specific and unsuited to a strategic, overarching assessment such as this. This is particularly the case given the broad and non site specific nature of the detail that is available in the proposed programme.

The EPA in its comments and submissions is very supportive of the RDP in principal. Their submissions have been given the appropriate level of consideration in preparing the ER and are further addressed in the implementation and monitoring recommendations.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency also made a submission regarding the proposed content of the ER. Their views relate in the first instance to consideration of potential trans-boundary effects. These and the other issues raised by them have been taken into account in this ER.

Given the very broad scope of the draft RDP measures and their potential to interact with virtually all environmental receptors of note it was determined that each RDP measure should be examined for its potential impacts on the environment. Therefore no measures were “scoped out” in advance of preparing the ER.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

A more specific set of proposals on the likely RDP content has now been prepared by DAFM, and captured in its draft document: “Description of Proposed Measures for RDP 2014-2020”. This document became available at the end of January 2014, and forms the basis of the ER as elaborated below.

In addressing the six Priority Areas required by the EU the national draft Programme proposes a range of measures, grouped thematically. The key aspects of the draft RDP relevant to the ER are presented

in summary form throughout the environmental impact evaluation. Importantly it should be noted that the various configurations and contents of each measure are based on the current draft proposals and consequently may be subject to change. The summary of measures presented within the ER is solely for the purpose of assisting in obtaining the necessary “Strategic Overview” in the context of environmental assessment and protection under SEA. Similarly the degree of financial support proposed for any given measure is simply provided to give an indication of the scale of the support which may be linked to the scale of any resultant environmental impacts. Consequently, as the draft RDP evolves, any minor changes in the thematic groupings of the measures or in the exact level of financial support afforded under any given measure will not alter the findings of the ER to any notable extent. This approach is allowed for in the SEA Regulations S.I. 435, 2004 under article 12, sub-section 2 (b) and (c).

The consideration of “Alternatives” under SEA in this report relates to recommended options/proposals for modifying the RDP solely in the context of the environmental issues or problems identified. Issues relating to the overall effectiveness, desirability, value for money etc. of the RDP are outside the scope of an ER.

The primary purpose of the ER is to identify any adverse environmental impacts that might be associated with the various measures and sub-measures of the development programme so that they can be eliminated or reduced from the outset. In the event of any such adverse impact being identified as likely then, subject to predictable, quantifiable data being available, a more empirical evaluation in respect of that specific measure and impact would be desirable. As no such adverse impacts were identified the need for an evaluation of this nature did not arise.

The degree of significance of likely impacts on the various environmental receptors that has been assigned in the matrix to any particular measure is presented in summary form as an “Impact Matrix”. It is, of necessity, a prediction and is not to imply that impacts cannot occur that are greater or lesser than the assigned value. Rather, it is based on the likelihood of such impacts arising and within a mature regulatory environment such as now pertains in Ireland. This approach is appropriate for an overarching document such as this Environmental Report dealing, as it must, with a Programme that has an exceptionally broad range of measures and sub-measures, all implemented across a wide and diverse geographical range of locations, conditions and individual circumstances. In most cases the impacts of the measures on the various environmental receptors are predicted to be positive but because of the lack of quantifiable data, as already discussed, the assignment of the significance of the positive impact is, of necessity, subjective by nature rather than empirically based.

The various environmental receptor headings in a matrix may be shown to be potentially impacted in a positive or negative manner. In such cases these are where relatively direct impacts may occur. There will in many cases be associated indirect impacts, e.g. in the case of water quality where positive or negative impacts link to indirect impacts on “Human Health” and biodiversity.

Appropriate Assessment

It should be noted that where state sponsored Plans/Programmes can potentially impact on designated areas for conservation an “Appropriate Assessment” under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations S.I. 447 of 2011 must also be carried out. Such an Assessment is currently in preparation within a parallel process. Preparing this assessment entails consulting with the Programme maker, i.e. DAFM, and with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

While SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) are separate processes they have many aspects in common and the relevant findings or recommendations are considered accordingly. Consequently over the course of preparing each assessment, (SEA and AA), regular consultation and information exchange was undertaken between the authors.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the RDP is to be implemented within and across a wide range of rural environments the current state of the environment as regards water quality, climate change etc. forms the backdrop in which the RDP is to be set and with which it will interact.

The current state of the environment, including environmental trends/evolution, is comprehensively described in the most recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication: the “State of the Environment Report- Ireland’s Environment” 2012. (Additional, more recent detailed data, is available on protected habitats and species from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG). This is more relevant to the Appropriate Assessment). The EPA report, the fifth such report, presents the most comprehensive information on the quality of Ireland’s environment. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic developments that have impacts and consequences for the environment, together with thematic assessments focusing on key trends, challenges and actions.

The EPA report presents a comprehensive series of “Thematic Assessment” chapters. The principal relevant assessments (relevant in the context of the RDP and SEA) in the report are considered to include:

- Water;
- Land and Soil;
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change;
- Air Quality and Trans-boundary Air Emissions;
- Nature and Biodiversity;
- Sustainable Resource Use;
- Consumption and Waste.

The key aspects of each of these thematic assessments is provided below.

2.2 WATER

The quality of Ireland’s rivers, transitional water bodies and coastal waters is considered to be comparatively good compared to that of Europe overall. In Ireland where polluted sites have been identified approximately half are attributed to large point sources such as municipal wastewater treatment plants and the remainder attributed to diffuse inputs. Principal among the diffuse sources of pollutants is agriculture and, to a lesser extent, forestry and peat cutting. Also in the wider context the EU has identified conflicts between EU water policy and other policies, including the Common Agricultural Policy.

Against this background meeting the Environmental Protection Objectives (specifically stringent water quality targets) set out in the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) for 2015, 2021 and 2027 will prove challenging. To address this challenge seven River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) have been prepared for Ireland. These RBMPs include measures for:

- Controlling inputs of phosphorus and nitrogen;
- Controlling inputs of organic pollutants such as silage and sewage;
- Controlling pathogens in water;
- Elimination of dangerous substances from water bodies;
- Maintaining sufficient water volumes in surface waters;
- Controlling hydromorphological conditions (i.e. physical characteristics) in rivers.

It is apparent therefore that rural development programmes, particularly agricultural development programmes, have the potential to influence water quality, its protection and management.

2.3 LAND AND SOIL

While Ireland has experienced a relatively high rate of land use change since the 1990s the soils, other than peatlands, are nonetheless considered to be in good condition. However this conclusion is regarded as somewhat compromised by insufficient data on land and soil quality and improvements in this area of knowledge are seen as necessary prerequisites for more integrated and effective land use management in the future. Clearly rural development programmes, such as the proposed RDP, have land use implications, including implications for maintaining Ireland's good soil conditions.

2.4 GREENHOUSE GASES (GHG) AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The European Commission Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy by 2050 points to EU-wide GHG emission reduction requirements of up to 80% by 2050. This is a significant requirement particularly for Ireland which, compared to the rest of the EU, has a situation where GHG emissions from agriculture are proportionally higher than for most Member States. The future direction of agricultural development in Ireland therefore has important implications for our GHG emissions profile.

In the context of the lifetime of the RDP (2014-2020) Ireland is required under the EU Climate and Energy Package to achieve a 20% reduction in GHG emissions from sources outside the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) by 2020. This is governed by the Effort Sharing Decision (406/2009/EC). The agricultural sector is predicted to account for 48% of non-ETS emissions in 2020, therefore it is important that the RDP should contain mitigation measures to ensure that it does not have an adverse impact on GHG emissions and if possible, should have a positive impact.

2.5 AIR QUALITY

Air quality in Ireland is of a comparatively high standard and the strategies implemented to achieve compliance with the EU National Emissions Ceilings Directive have successfully controlled emissions of sulphur dioxide, ammonia and volatile organic compounds. Problem areas remain in respect of nitrous oxides and particulate matter, both associated with transport, not agriculture. Also particulates in rural towns remain a problem in contrast to our major cities that have seen reductions due to a lower usage of solid fuel and the ban on smoky coal.

2.6 BIODIVERSITY

Ireland's marine and terrestrial environments support a wide variety of species and habitats, many of which are of international importance. However across Europe, including Ireland, biodiversity is in

decline. Major causes of decline in Europe are unsustainable or inappropriate land use including certain forms of agricultural land use.

An important element in the conservation of biodiversity is the creation of protected areas and while good progress has been made in this regard there are still habitats of national importance that require to be designated for protection.

Ireland has international and legal obligations to protect biodiversity and these include a commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2020. While protection afforded to designated habitats and species is of value it of itself cannot halt biodiversity decline. Overall land use policies and programmes that adequately address and incorporate biodiversity considerations are regarded as key measures in meeting the 2020 biodiversity commitment.

2.7 CONSUMPTION AND WASTE

Ireland has achieved its EU waste recycling and recovery targets for many waste streams including electronics/electrical wastes, paper, plastic and glass. Notably since 2008 there has been a significant reduction (81%) in construction waste associated with the collapse of that sector. Ireland has also achieved the first target for diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill as required under the EU Landfill Directive. Potential problems for the future include issues relating to the availability of landfill as there is only twelve years' gross municipal landfill disposal capacity remaining in the State.

3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A useful starting point in understanding the potential for impacts on the environment arising from the implementation of the RDP as currently drafted is the degree of financial support afforded under each measure. The following table provides an indication of the approximate levels of support, these levels may be adjusted as the draft RDP is being finalised.

Levels of Support Across all Measures

MEASURE	Funding	Approximate % of total fund
Agri-Environment and Climate Measures		
- GLAS and Glas +	€1,450m	36%
- Organic Farming Scheme	€44	1%
- Locally led output based Schemes	€70m	<2%
Areas of Natural Constraint (including island farmers)	€1,370	34%
On-Farm Capital Investments		
- TAMS II	€395m	10%
- Bio Energy Scheme	€12m	0.5%
Knowledge Transfer Measures		
- Knowledge Transfer Groups	€100m	2.5%
- EIP Operational Groups	€4m	0.1%
- CPD for Advisors	€2m	0.05%
- Targeted AHW Advisory Service	€6m	0.15%
Collaborative and Quality Focused Measures		
- Support for Collaborative Farming	€3m	0.1%
Targeted Support		
- Beef Data and Genomics Programme	€295m	7.5%
LEADER	€250m*	6%
Technical Assistance	€6m	0.15%

*Incorporates €15m for two food supports (Artisan Food Collaborative Scheme and Regional Product Development Support)

It is apparent from the table that the GLAS measure and that for the Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) account for a significant proportion of the RDP budget which, when taken together, account for almost three quarters of the overall budget. It is to be expected therefore that these two measures

might have a disproportionate potential to impact, either positively or negatively, on the environment.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section considers the environmental impact of each of the proposed RDP measures in turn. With respect to each, the analysis sets out the context for the intervention, implementation approaches, budgets and other dimensions, as well as the detailed anticipated environmental effects.

4.2 AGRI-ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE MEASURES

4.2.1 GLAS (GREEN LOW-CARBON AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME)

Context for Intervention

Ireland's main farming system is grassland based livestock and dairy production with approximately 8% of land in tillage. Certain farmlands however are restricted in the way agriculture should be conducted due to the necessity to meet obligations and objectives in respect of the protection of the natural habitats and water quality associated with those areas. The proposed new GLAS scheme adopts an integrated approach to achieving these objectives.

The inclusion of an Agri-Environment climate measure is compulsory under the rural development Regulation. The proposed scheme will deliver overarching benefits in terms of the rural environment whilst addressing the issues of climate change mitigation, water quality and the preservation of priority habitats and species.

In order to contribute to the mitigation of the environmental impacts of agriculture GLAS has been designed to achieve the delivery of targeted environmental advice and best practice at farm level. It aims to work within the framework for environmental sustainability as set down by the following EU Directives and national and international targets:

- The EU Climate Change and Renewable Energy Package and the Kyoto Protocol.
- The Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive and the Nitrates Directive
- The Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the European target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020.

This measure also takes into account the need for a targeted Agri-Environmental Scheme highlighted in the Environmental Analysis of "Food Harvest 2020", the industry-sponsored strategy for agriculture and food up to 2020.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The purpose of the measure is to promote ways of using agricultural land that are compatible with:

- The protection and improvement of the environment and achieving water quality, climate change and biodiversity objectives;

- The conservation of high nature value farmed environments both within and outside of designated Natura 2000 sites;
- The use of nutrient management planning in farming practice;
- Fostering knowledge transfer in the area of sustainable environmental farming systems.

The proposed minimum contract under GLAS will be 5 years. GLAS will comprise of an integrated measure with payments for Natura sites under Article 30 of the Regulation included in the general scheme under specific actions (Farmland Habitat Conservation, Conservation of Bird Species, Uplands Conservation). GLAS+ payments would be put in place for a limited number of farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit.

Core Requirements

In the first instance all farmers in the Measure must comply with the following list of core requirements. These are mandatory and aim to ensure that farmers have an enhanced level of environmental knowledge, evidenced by records kept of actions delivered and underpinned by a plan for nutrient resource efficiency on their holding:

- A Farm Advisory Service (FAS) approved agricultural planner must prepare GLAS application.
- A Nutrient Management Plan for the whole farm must be in place before payment issues.
- Knowledge Transfer by means of a training course for specific actions complemented by on-line demonstrations/advice on good environmental practices.
- Record keeping.

The full list of requirements under GLAS are provided in Annex 1 below.

Qualifying Environmental Requirements and Actions under GLAS

OBJECTIVE:	
GLAS aims to address the cross-cutting objectives of climate change, water quality and biodiversity.	
CORE	Core Management Requirements
	<p>All of these requirements are compulsory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Farm Advisory Service (FAS) approved agricultural planner must prepare GLAS application • Nutrient Management Planning • Training in environmental practices and standards • Record keeping of actions delivered

<p>PRIORITY</p>	<p>TIER 1 Priority Environmental Assets and Action</p> <p>All farmers with PEAs get first priority access to the Scheme in Year One and subsequent years. It is not guaranteed that all eligible applicants in Tier 1 will get into the Scheme and scoring matrix will apply if necessary.</p> <p>If any of these Assets are applicable to your holding, you must choose them, plan the relevant actions, and as a result you will receive priority access to GLAS in the order 1 – 5 as follows (<i>NB order not finalised</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmland Habitat (private Natura sites) 2. Farmland Birds (e.g. Twite, Curlew, Corncrake, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier) 3. Commonages (80% participation <i>Note: lower participation levels addressed in Tier 2</i>) 4. High Status Water Area 5. Rare Breeds <p>If your wholefarm stocking-rate exceeds 140kg Livestock Manure Nitrogen per hectare (produced on the holding), or you have greater than 30 ha of arable crops, you may still qualify for priority access even if you do not have one of the Priority Assets listed above. To qualify, you must undertake one of the following 4 actions. These places will be filled in order 6 – 9 (<i>NB order not finalised</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Low Emission Slurry Spreading 7. Minimum Tillage 8. Green Cover Establishment from a Sown Crop 9. Wild Bird Cover (grassland farms only) <p>Finally, if you are a registered Organic farmer you may apply for priority access to the scheme under this tier, by selecting actions appropriate to the environmental priorities on your farm. However, if any of the assets listed from 1-5 above apply, you must choose them first.</p>	<p>YEAR ONE and subsequent years</p>
<p>SECONDARY</p>	<p>TIER 2 Environmental Assets and Actions</p> <p>All farmers with Environmental Assets and Actions get secondary access to the Scheme. It is not guaranteed that all eligible applicants in Tier 2 will get into the Scheme and scoring matrix will apply if necessary.</p> <p>If any of these Assets are applicable to your holding you must choose them and as a result you will get secondary access (once Tier I is filled) to the Scheme in the order 1 - 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commonages (50% - 79% participation) 2. Vulnerable Water Area <p>If you wish to be considered for secondary access (but none of the above are applicable to your farm), you must choose one of the following 4 actions. These places will be filled in order 3 - 6 (<i>NB order not finalised</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Low Emission Slurry Spreading 4. Minimum Tillage 5. Green Cover Establishment from a Sown Crop 6. Wild Bird Cover (grassland farms only) <p><i>Farmers in Tier 2 will get access in sequence in subsequent years also (if they apply)</i></p>	<p>YEAR TWO and subsequent years</p>

GENERAL	<p>TIER 3 General Actions*</p> <p>These actions aim to enhance the climate change, water quality and biodiversity benefits delivered and can be chosen in addition to Priority and Secondary actions or on their own (choosing only General Actions will not guarantee entry to the Scheme):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Input Permanent Pasture • Traditional Hay Meadow • Riparian Margins • Coppicing Hedgerows • Laying Hedgerows • Planting New Hedgerows • Traditional Stone Wall Maintenance • Tree Planting (whips) • Environmental Management of Fallow Land • Arable Margins • Birds, Bees and Bat Boxes • Wild Flower margin • Wild Bird cover for tillage farmers • Protection of water courses (not in High Status or Vulnerable Areas) • Protection of archaeological sites <p>*A selection process will be used to allow farmers join GLAS by means of these actions if take-up of Priority and Secondary Assets and Actions falls short.</p>	YEAR TWO (possibly) or YEAR THREE depending on funding
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Two-Tier Entry Requirements

Tier 1:

Priority will be given to farmers who choose at least one action from the Priority list above in order to join the scheme. Some of these actions will be mandatory for farms in certain locations: e.g. farms with watercourses must choose the protection of watercourses action, those in freshwater pearl mussel areas must address that issue.

Tier 2:

Once all places under Tier 1 have been filled, and if there is capacity, a selection process will be used to allow other farmers who have chosen actions from the General list to join the Scheme. The selection process will apply weightings in terms of environmental benefit to actions and a scoring system will be used to allocate places.

Other Actions

Farmers can choose additional actions from the Priority list and/or the General list (Annex 1), to bring their annual payment to the maximum of €5,000. Planners will be required to advise farmers to choose actions most suitable for their farms and which deliver the greatest environmental dividend.

New actions specifically for tillage farmers have been included in order to encourage uptake and to increase the number of actions contributing to climate change objectives.

All applicants will be required to engage the services of a planner in the preparation of their application and successful applicants will be required to have a nutrient management plan prepared for the farm. The importance of training to ensure proper delivery of commitments and to protect against the occurrence of error rates is also recognised and training modules in environmentally sustainable farming practices will be delivered under the Knowledge Transfer measure.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is to be €1,450m.

It is proposed that a maximum payment of €5,000 per annum will apply, with the Scheme building up to the inclusion of some 50,000 farmers. It is also proposed that, within budget limits, a GLAS+ payment would be put in place for a limited number of farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit. It is proposed that this payment will be up to €2,000 per annum.

Target Groups

It is suggested that the following could be specifically targeted:

- Farms with high status water quality sites;
- Conservation habitats with poor or bad status;
- Specific species under immediate threat;
- Intensive farmers with a grassland stocking rate of >140kg of Organic N per hectare and tillage farmers with more than 30 hectares of arable crops.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to GLAS and GLAS+

The purpose of GLAS is to facilitate and promote ways of using agricultural land that are compatible with the protection and conservation of environmentally sensitive areas and receptors, designated or otherwise. It has therefore a high degree of environmental requirements and mechanisms built into the measure for achieving those core objectives. As such GLAS can be regarded first and foremost as an environmental protection measure rather than primarily an agricultural development measure. Its environmental objectives, mechanisms and required outcomes, all are designed to maximise positive environmental results.

In devising the GLAS measure the DAFM was informed by the experience gained over three decades of implementing predecessor programmes, namely the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) and the Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS). The development of these earlier schemes was progressed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, including the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NWPS) of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

For an understanding of the specific environmental dimension and impacts of GLAS therefore the summarised description of the measure, as presented above, should be consulted as many of the proposed actions and objectives of GLAS, and their environmental consequences, are inextricably linked.

As stated in the draft RDP the scheme is “green” on the basis of the following:

- It preserves traditional hay meadows and low input pastures;
- It is low-carbon as it retains the carbon stocks in soil through margins and habitat preservation and practices such as minimum tillage;
- It is “Agri-Environment” as it promotes agricultural actions which introduce or continue to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation.

GLAS will, as is the intention, make a “significant” contribution to the conservation of natural habitats and to the conservation of the floral and faunal species these habitats support. As such the measures represent the single most important element of the draft RDP as regards the protection of biodiversity. The measure will also have positive impacts on biodiversity beyond national boundaries in that it affords protection to a range of migratory species and acts to conserve the habitats such species use for that part of their life cycle spent in Ireland. An in-depth analysis of the potential impacts of GLAS on Natura 2000 sites has been carried out for the Appropriate Assessment report.

The measure will, in addition, have some degree of positive impacts in that it promotes low intensity agriculture and hence reduced materials consumption, reduces the likelihood of land abandonment and thereby conserving the traditional landscapes and helps retain the rural population these areas support.

The introduction of a Traditional Buildings measure is also under consideration, and this may be appropriate to the locally led model. This would be similar to the measure last employed under REPS 4 and would be targeted at the preservation and conservation of traditional farm buildings and structures. Coupled with the “protection of archaeological sites” Actions (as per Annex 1) these will result in some positive impacts on Cultural Heritage.

GLAS and GLAS+
SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity			<i>Positive</i>	
Population		<i>Positive</i>		
Human Health	<i>None</i>			
Fauna			<i>Positive</i>	
Flora			<i>Positive</i>	
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air		<i>Positive</i>		
Climatic Factors			<i>Positive</i>	
Material Assets¹	<i>Minor (Positive)</i>			
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)		<i>Positive</i>		
Landscape			<i>Positive</i>	
Materials consumption		<i>Positive</i>		

Consideration of Alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

GLAS has been designed in the light of the operation of similar schemes over many years. As such the format, mechanisms and finances etc. for the current proposals in the RDP are considered to represent the optimum approach for achieving sustainable agriculture and the avoidance of any negative impacts. Consequently the issue of alternative approaches does not arise.

Mitigation

GLAS has been designed to contribute to the mitigation of the environmental impacts of agriculture and to achieve the delivery of targeted environmental advice and best practice at farm level. It is in essence a mitigation measure in its own right.

Performance Indicators

Key output indicators to measure performance include:

- Area of Natura land under contracts;
- Area of Commonage under contracts;

¹ 1 For the purposes of this report the term “Material Assets” means any physical asset of monetary value or replacement cost. It includes, but is not limited to, farmland, livestock, buildings, and public infrastructure such as roads, pipelines etc.

- Number of contracts prioritising water quality;
- Number of holdings with nutrient management plans;
- Area under Wild Bird Cover;
- Volume of slurry spread using Low Trajectory spreading equipment;
- Number of trees planted;
- Length of hedgerow maintained;
- Length of stone wall maintained;
- Length of Riparian Margins contracted;
- Number of farm with Nutrient Management Plans;
- Area of land contracted for Minimum Tillage.

Category	Output Targets (provisional estimates)
Number of farms with Nutrient Management Plan	50,000
Area of commonage under contracts	150,000ha (based on 50% of declared area 2013)
% of Scheme funds invested in Natura and wider biodiversity including Commonages	40%
% of Scheme funds invested in water quality	30%
% of Scheme funds invested in General Environmental actions	Combined target of 30% for climate change and general environmental actions

Monitoring

The Agri-Environment Division has developed an in depth understanding of Agri-Environment schemes and their delivery over a number of years. A specific computer based system will be developed for GLAS to include facilities for on-line applications, a mapping system, payments system, on farm inspection outcomes and reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

Appropriate Assessment

Not all land areas and environmental receptors of conservation importance or of particular sensitivity are specifically protected through formal designation for conservation such as that afforded to Natura sites. In the case of those designated sites a separate environmental assessment - an "Appropriate Assessment" - is required in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Under this Directive the potential impacts of any plan or programme on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site of European conservation importance, this includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs), are to be assessed by means of Appropriate Assessment (AA). Such a report is at an advanced stage of preparation in regard to the RDP.

While all of the measures of the draft RDP were examined in the context of AA it is the GLAS measures in particular that have the greatest capacity to interact with designated sites for conservation. For this reason the conclusions/findings of the AA report are reported here.

The Habitats Directive is implemented in Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), which supersede the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 and amendments. The purpose of AA is to assess the impacts of projects in combination with the effects of other plans and projects against the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site and to ascertain whether they would adversely affect the integrity of that site. "Other Plans" includes the draft RDP 2014-2020.

In most cases, the plan or project to be assessed is spatially explicit, such as Local Authority Development Plans. The RDP is different in that it is a national plan/programme encompassing the entire territory of the State. Screening each Natura 2000 site in Ireland individually for potential impacts would not be appropriate to the high-level, strategic nature of the RDP. Therefore, the approach taken in the AA is to assess each RDP measure against the habitats and species that comprise the Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the Natura 2000 sites. . Those reports have been prepared in accordance with:

- the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011;
- the European Commission’s Methodological Guidance (2002);
- DECLG’s Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (2009).

Findings of Appropriate Assessment

At advanced draft stage, the AA report concludes that:

“the RDP 2014-2020 has identified a number of elements within the plan that, in the absence of mitigation, could result in potentially significant negative impacts on the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites (protected habitat sites). Several measures for mitigating potential negative impacts have been specified. When these mitigation measures are in place, the risk of impacts will be not significant.”

“The RDP 2014-2020 as adopted will not have any significant impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites”

4.2.2 ORGANIC FARMING SCHEME

Context for Intervention

In 2010, across the EU27 Member States 5.7% of the total utilised agricultural area (UAA) was devoted to organic crop area. In Ireland the corresponding figure was 1.1%.The introduction of a more targeted incentivised payment structure aims to more effectively increase organic production. Food Harvest 2020 recognised that while the organic sector in Ireland is relatively small in relation to agriculture as a whole, the sector does represent an opportunity for growth and endorsed the target of 5% of the UAA to be organically farmed land.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The support under this measure aims to encourage farmers to convert from conventional farming methods and to apply organic farming methods as defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as well as maintain these methods after the initial period of conversion, thus answering society’s demand for the use of environmentally friendly farming practices. The proposal is for a continuity of the general structure and implementation/administration of the existing Organic Farming Scheme which entails an annual area based payment over a 5/7 year period with a higher payment for the initial two year conversion period. The key selection tool will be a five year business plan combined with a scoring matrix. The scheme incorporates the completion of a training course as a mandatory eligibility requirement. Inclusion of Ongoing Training as an optional supplementary measure is also under consideration.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is expected to be €44m.

Target groups

The target group is conventional farmers who may consider the organic option. In addition the maintenance of existing organic farmers is a priority.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Organic Farming Scheme

In the rural development context, organic farming is mainly expected to establish and maintain a sustainable management system for agriculture. The farming practices it promotes contribute to improving soil and water quality, to mitigation and adaptation to climate change and to the improvement of the state of biodiversity e.g. by crop rotation, use of organic fertilisers, improvement to soil organic matter and by no use of synthetic plant protection products or artificial fertilisers. All of these positive environmental attributes that are an inherent part of organic farming will be supported as a consequence of participation in the Organic Farming Scheme. Importantly the scheme doesn't simply seek to maintain the current level of participation but seeks to achieve an ambitious expansion of the land area so farmed. A consequence of this is that organic, low intensity, farming practices replace existing more intensive agricultural practices. This benefits all aspects of the environment.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon by the organic farming scheme are presented in the matrix below. While the contribution to human health of organic food versus intensively farmed produce is often the subject of heated debate it can at least be concluded that the production of high quality produce, irrespective of how it is produced, is of health benefit and on that basis has been assigned "some significance" (positive) in the summary matrix. Organic farming is also expected to contribute to maintenance of a rural population through the diversification of agricultural production it affords and to the protection of the traditional landscape form that is associated with low intensity farming.

Organic Farming Scheme

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity			<i>Positive</i>	
Population		<i>Positive</i>		
Human Health		<i>Positive</i>		
Fauna			<i>Positive</i>	
Flora			<i>Positive</i>	
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air		<i>Positive</i>		
Climatic Factors		<i>Positive</i>		
Material Assets		<i>Positive</i>		
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape			<i>Positive</i>	
Materials consumption	<i>Minor (Positive)</i>			

Alternatives

The likely impacts arising from expanding participation on organic farming are all predicted to be positive. The alternative to Organic farming is normal farming, with inputs of, for example, artificial fertilisers and consequently greater environmental impacts. It is considered therefore that alternative configurations of the RDP would serve no useful environmental purpose.

Mitigation

No adverse environmental impacts are predicted, consequently the issue of mitigation does not arise.

Performance Indicators

The performance indicators are:

- Output targets;
- Expenditure - €44m;

Monitoring

An online application system will be developed which will greatly facilitate the collating and reporting of monitoring data. Importantly, monitoring of the scheme will also be delivered through inspectorate staff.

4.2.3 LOCALLY LED OUTPUT BASED SCHEMES

Context for Intervention

While the GLAS and GLAS + measures have been designed to address many of the high priority environmental, climate change and biodiversity challenges facing the sector, there is a recognition that large scale measures such as GLAS may not be the most appropriate vehicle for addressing specific issues. For example, there are many environmental and biodiversity challenges which manifest themselves in a particular manner at local level and are thus not as suited to the approach of national level measures. Thus, locally led projects aimed at specified environmental and biodiversity outputs can be an important complement to wider national level measures. This measure also responds to the issues highlighted by the Environmental Impact Assessment of Food Harvest 2020.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The objective of the measure is to provide a complementary approach to the overall Agri-Environmental effort, one which encourages the development of bespoke projects designed to respond to specific environmental challenges. As well as responding to a number of such challenges identified centrally, it is also intended to use the measure to promote independent identification of priorities and, by way of a competitive-call process, to encourage locally-driven solutions.

It is proposed that support here could take the form of:

- Support for a small number of projects identified centrally as being of critical environmental importance, such as the continuance and expansion of the existing Burren Farming for Conservation Project, and the preservation of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel;
- The establishment of a competitive fund to select a number of priority projects on foot of a call for proposals.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is expected to be €70m. Each project will be costed individually, based on the inputs required to achieve the outputs targeted, but will respect maximum levels laid down in the Regulation.

Target Projects

Support for two projects, namely the existing Burren Farming for Conservation Project and a new project directed at securing the future of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel have been recently been announced. In addition, it is considered that a number of other cameo projects will be recruited by way of a series of competitive calls for proposals. This measure will be targeted at key priority issues being addressed locally.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Locally Led Output Based Schemes

The sole objective of this scheme is environmental protection through the support for locally based, output led, projects. The resultant impacts therefore can be confidently predicted to be entirely positive. However the nature and scale of those positive environmental impacts resulting from that support cannot be defined in advance as it is directly related to any one of a very wide range of potential projects.

Alternatives

This scheme is aimed at achieving positive environmental outputs. Consequently the issue of alternatives does not arise.

Mitigation

The scheme is an environmental protection/enhancement scheme aimed at mitigating adverse environmental effects, irrespective of source, agricultural or otherwise.

Performance Indicators

The nature of this scheme is such that its performance is directly linked to a number of specific, environmental protection based, targets related to the individual project concerned. Relevant output indicators might include: the area of land concerned, the number of farms involved, the number of farmers trained or the number of collaborative ventures supported. At project level, this would be refined to reflect the specific priorities being supported.

Monitoring

A scheme specific computer programme is being developed to cover all aspects of the Agri-Environment effort over the period of the RDP. This will be supplemented as required by dedicated data collection on a project-by-project basis.

The Agri-Environment Division has developed an in-depth understanding of Agri-Environment schemes and their delivery over a number of years. In addition, for the targeted output schemes, DAFM expect to work closely with the NPWS.

4.3 AREAS OF NATURAL CONSTRAINT

Context for Intervention

Farmers in Areas of Natural Constraint face significant handicaps deriving from factors such as remoteness, difficult topography and poor soil conditions. The provision of financial support in these areas is a contribution to the continued viability of these farms, and the continued farming of that land in line with environmental standards.

Purpose and Approach Taken

Farmers in Areas of Natural Constraint tend to have lower farm productivity and higher unit production costs than farmers in other areas. Without financial support, these lower returns from farming would pose a significant threat to the future viability of these farming communities.

The stated objectives of this Scheme are to:

- ensure continued agricultural land use, thereby contributing to the maintenance of a viable rural society;
- maintain the countryside;
- maintain and promote sustainable farming systems, which in particular take account of environmental protection requirements.

At present, the delivery of support via the existing Less Favoured Areas (FSA) scheme is integrated into the Single Farm Payment system. This has proven to be a very efficient way of administering the scheme.

Each Member State has until 2018 to designate its ANCs by reference to biophysical criteria. This may change the designation of areas and the structure of the Scheme. Under the Scheme different levels of aid can be paid, (i) depending on the severity of the natural constraint and (ii) the system of farming.

Applicants for support will be required to:

- be a registered herd owner,
- occupy and farm a minimum of three hectares of forage land in a ANC area
- comply with required stocking rates
- comply with good agricultural and environmental conditions.

Support for Island Farming

It is proposed to add a top up payment for a separate category of Island Farmers within the structure of the ANC Scheme. This top up will compensate for the particular challenges faced by Island Farmers. Work is ongoing in relation to setting the rate for this top up payment.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is expected to be €1,370m

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Areas of Natural Constraint

The ANC scheme has as its central objective the maintenance of farming in areas that, in the absence of financial support, would simply not be viable in many cases. This has implications not only for the occupants of those farms but also for the wider rural community in the locality. It is evident from an environmental and population perspective that one important result of the financial support the ANC provides is that it can contribute to the continuation of farming and alleviate the threat of land abandonment in particularly marginal areas.

When linked, as it is, to the qualifying criteria such as having to farm in an environmentally responsible manner (e.g. avoidance of overgrazing, appropriate level of nutrient application etc.) the outcome can be regarded as beneficial and environmentally positive. Also, the financial support provided increases the likelihood that these farms invest in modernising their on-farm infrastructure thereby enabling the application of more sustainable farming practices.

The environmental benefits of low intensity farming are several. Through the prevention of invasive growth a diversity of habitats, such as low input pastures and hedgerows, are maintained. This contributes to both biodiversity and landscape. While “landscape” is a subjective concept it is widely regarded that Ireland’s diverse patchwork of fields and hedgerows, interspersed with low density housing, are a central and defining feature. In contrast, land abandonment would result in the loss of these attributes as well as undermine the clear social benefits of maintaining a viable rural community. Also, the ANC measure through conserving existing low intensity farmland protects against the loss of the Material Asset such farmland represents.

The environmental considerations in relation to island farming and maintaining island communities that are both viable and vibrant is widely regarded as a desirable social objective. Typically such communities face many economic challenges and compared to mainland populations are disproportionately dependent on income based on a mixture of low intensity farming, fishing, tourism and crafts industries. Supports provided to farming through programmes such as the RDP are a key

element in maintaining island population densities at levels sufficient to be viable. Also, island culture is viewed as a distinct and important element of our cultural heritage and support for island communities is regarded as essential for its protection and maintenance.

Low intensity farming on these islands has little potential for adverse impacts and, on the contrary, helps maintain a diversity of land use that in many cases results in a range of wildlife habitats that would not be available if some island lands were to be abandoned. For example the maintenance of Ireland’s population of chough (a threatened species of the crow family) is critically dependant on the type of grassy areas that low intensity grazing creates in coastal areas.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon by the ANC scheme are presented in the matrix below.

**Areas of Natural Constraint
SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity			<i>Positive</i>	
Population			<i>Positive</i>	
Human Health	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Fauna			<i>Positive</i>	
Flora			<i>Positive</i>	
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Climatic Factors	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Material Assets			<i>Positive</i>	
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)			<i>Positive</i>	
Landscape			<i>Positive</i>	
Materials consumption	<i>None</i>			

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

As there are no negative environmental implications associated with the ANC supports the consideration of alternative approaches within the RDP is not necessary.

Mitigation

The linking of payments under the scheme to a requirement to employ sustainable environmental practices constitutes an inbuilt mitigation measure ensuring that, overall, no adverse impacts result.

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators are:

- Expenditure €1,370
- Total number of holdings / beneficiaries supported 95,000 farmers pa

Monitoring

There is a dual system in place in terms of administration and on the spot checks and inspections to ensure that stocking rate and GAEC requirements are adhered to.

4.4 ON-FARM CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

4.4.1 TARGETED AGRICULTURAL MODERNISATION SCHEMES II (TAMS II)

Context for Intervention

Investment in physical assets will enable the sector to respond to a wide range of policy challenges, including the cessation of milk quotas from 2015, the need for more modern and efficient infrastructure, animal health and welfare issues, etc. The need for an enhanced grant scheme for young farmers in order to encourage greater land mobility was also identified.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The objective of the measure is to encourage investment in a number of particular target areas which will promote, in particular, increased competitiveness in those sectors in which grant-aid will be made available.

The approach taken in the measures is to target particular areas of investment in order to assist farmers to establish or upgrade their facilities in a particular manner. Considerable capital costs can be encountered by farmers, particularly new entrants, in order to provide new facilities on their holdings or upgrade the existing facilities. The provision of a higher aid intensity for young farmers is aimed at supporting young farmers wishing to enter the sector or improve their holdings.

The grant-aid provided will ensure that farmers can meet the current challenges of the agriculture sector as well as providing benefits in relation to animal welfare, the environment, reduction of labour costs and increased efficiency.

The areas prioritised for investment in the current proposal for TAMS II will contribute to a number of central themes in the farming sector, including:

- enabling growth and expansion;
- environmental and climate change issues;
- supporting increased efficiency of holdings;

- improving animal health and welfare.

Areas to be Funded

The initial areas identified for funding are:

- Farm nutrient storage;
- Animal housing;
- Dairy equipment;
- Low emission spreading equipment;
- Animal Welfare and Farm Safety;
- Pig and poultry investments in energy, water meters and medicine dispensers;
- Organic Capital Investment (organic farmers only);
- Young Farmer Capital Investment Scheme (including the above areas and dairy buildings).

Budget and Costings

The total budget available for TAMS II priority areas over the course of the RDP is estimated at €395 million.

Target Groups

Farmers in all areas of the country will be entitled to apply for grant-aid under TAMS II, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria laid down in each individual scheme.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to On-Farm Capital Investment

The principal environmental implications of each of the targeted capital investment supports are anticipated to be as follows:

Dairy

As a consequence of the proposed cessation of milk quotas from 2015 Ireland's milk production is expected to expand significantly over the coming years. This will inevitably result in both increased milk throughput per dairy farm and a probable increase in the number of milking parlours nationally.

Milk waste and milk contaminate wash-waters have a high potential to cause water pollution, most notably through de-oxygenation of surface water courses. The first requirement in reducing dairy related water pollution is support for an adequate level of on-farm understanding of the importance to avoid unnecessary milk loss to the environment and in the abilities to optimise the use and management of the milk handling facility. The knowledge transfer elements of the RDP, described elsewhere in this report (Knowledge Transfer Measure), should act to assist dairy farmers in being appropriately educated in these matters. However, to be fully effective that knowledge must be matched with an appropriate level of investment in on-farm infrastructure. In this regard TAMS II provides financial support that will allow for the construction of well-designed parlours fitted out with modern equipment and of sufficient capacity to handle the milk throughput on any given farm. Such systems optimise water use while simultaneously minimising the generation of contaminated wastewaters and milk losses to the environment. Also, new milking parlours can be designed and equipped in a manner that facilitates the application of more efficient hygiene through the use of "Clean in Place" (CIP) techniques. CIP reduces both the use of water and of cleaning agents.

In conclusion it is considered that while the TAMS II element will facilitate the expansion of the dairy sector the potential environmental consequences of the associated expansion of milking facilities can be potentially offset by support for TAMS II ensuring that all such facilities are capable of minimising

milk loss to the environment. This has positive implications for surface water quality, and for the biodiversity/flora/fauna that good water quality supports.

Farm Nutrient (Slurry) Storage

The inadequate storage and management of slurry is a well-known cause of surface and groundwater pollution. This arises as a consequence of age deterioration and/or improper construction resulting in leakage of slurry to the environment. Also, in cases where inadequate storage capacity exists, this can result in the land spreading of slurry at excessive application rates and/or under unsuitable weather conditions. Support under TAMS II will ensure that farmers can more readily fund new slurry storage systems or to upgrade, expand and modernise existing systems. As the support for slurry storage is to extend to arable farms this will facilitate the substitution of slurry for artificial fertilizer use while also expanding the available land area for slurry disposal. These outcomes will have a positive impact on surface waters, aquatic flora/fauna, groundwaters and soil.

Animal Housing

From an environmental perspective improvements in animal housing can have a number of benefits. Firstly properly designed and sized housing can greatly facilitate the collection and subsequent storage of animal wastes that are generated indoors. This has the benefit of reducing the risk of water pollution from such material. Secondly, modern well designed facilities can improve the ability to prevent and manage disease while also meeting general animal welfare requirements. Compliance with the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 is also relevant here. The TAMS II support can assist farmers in achieving these worthwhile objectives.

Pig and Poultry

While investments in equipment related to such aspects as energy, water meters and medicine dispensers in the pig and poultry sector should assist in the primary aim of developing these sectors there will be consequent environmental benefits. These benefits include: reduced energy demand, increased opportunities for water management through the use of water metres and enhanced animal health and welfare. All are positive environmental outcomes.

Low Emission Spreading Equipment

The spreading of slurry on land has a number of important benefits for agriculture, first as a valuable natural fertilizer and a substitute for the importation of artificial fertilizers and second as a means of slurry disposal. However land spreading also carries significant risks to the environment in terms of potential surface water and groundwater pollution. It is also a significant source of ammonia (NH₃) emissions, a GHG, nationally. (Almost 98% of national emissions are attributed to agriculture, with the land spreading of cattle manure accounting for 47% of this total). Reductions in ammonia emissions resulting from slurry spreading is an important objective as under the National Emissions Ceilings Directive (2001), Ireland is limited to produce 116 kT/annum of ammonia. Whilst Ireland is currently compliant with emissions below this target at 113 kT, future targets are likely to be more restrictive.

There are basically two methods whereby slurry is land spread; splash-plate and trailing –shoe. In trailing-shoe systems the equipment directs the slurry via a pipe to a “shoe” attached at the base of each pipe. These shoes separate the sward canopy and apply slurry at the soil surface. There are various configurations of these systems, classed as low-emission including some that open a slit in the soil.

These low emission slurry spreading techniques have been demonstrated to be capable of achieving a number of environmental benefits when compared to that of splash-plate spreading, including:

- reducing the risk of runoff to surface waters;
- extending the spreading time “window”;
- achieving significant reductions in ammonia emissions. (Reductions of up to 95% have been reported. However, the actual reductions consistently achieved vary significantly depending on numerous operational and other factors including: the quality characteristics of the slurry, the nature of land use and soil type, prevailing weather conditions and time of year);
- reducing associated odour nuisance

Animal slurry is also an important substitute for imported chemical NPK fertilizer (e.g. 4.5 m3 of cattle slurry can potentially replace one 50 kg bag of fertilizer). In the context of the wider environment this has the merit of acting as a substitute for artificial fertilizer that would have been manufactured in potentially polluting heavy industrial processes.

Relevant Directives and guidelines in relation to land spreading include the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) introduced in Ireland through a series of Regulations, the most recent of which was the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations S.I. No.31, 2014 and the Teagasc Guideline “Land spreading of Animal Manures, Farm Wastes & Non – agricultural Organic Wastes” .

In conclusion capital support for low emission spreading equipment increases the ability of farms to better utilise animal slurry resources while also enhancing overall environmental performance in a positive way.

Summary of Environmental Implications

Capital investment support for these various elements (slurry storage, animal housing etc.) will provide farms with the technical means to operate with reduced environmental impact. The benefits of this improved and increased infrastructure capacity will be further reinforced when coupled with the “Knowledge Transfer” elements of the RDP which will assist farmers to be appropriately educated in key environmental matters such as understanding and appreciating the necessity to protect the environment and, secondly, in acquiring the necessary skills in how to achieve that protection at a practical operational level.

Investment in upgrading and improving on-farm infrastructure is important in maintaining and building upon previous capital investments and thereby makes a positive impact in protecting the Material Assets that these investments represent.

Positive benefits also arise in respect of improving efficiency and hence reducing materials consumption per unit of production. This latter benefit translates to improved income and maintenance of a viable rural population. Reduction in materials consumption can also translate into a reduction in the generation of waste.

Improved farm infrastructure arising from increased capital investment across the range of facilities (e.g. slurry storage and land spreading equipment) also has the capacity to yield positive benefits by reducing the risks of accidental pollution and hence serves to protect the natural environment most notably in the area of water, soil, biodiversity, flora, fauna, and climate.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes-TAMS II
SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity		<i>Positive</i>		
Population		<i>Positive</i>		
Human Health	<i>None</i>			
Fauna		<i>Positive</i>		
Flora		<i>Positive</i>		
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air		<i>Positive</i>		
Climatic Factors			<i>Positive</i>	
Material Assets			<i>Positive</i>	
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape	<i>None</i>			
Materials consumption			<i>Positive</i>	

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

From the above environmental impact analysis it is evident that no adverse impacts of consequence arise from the implementation of TAMS II and that overall it has the potential to make a positive contribution to environmental protection. Consequently there would be no merit in adopting alternative approaches within these elements of the RDP.

Mitigation measures to reduce the significance of the potential effect

The construction and existence of significant physical on-farm structures has a potential for adverse environmental impacts, these include local nuisance during construction, visual impacts and impacts on protected sites or structures. Such developments are controlled by means of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000-2012, administered by the relevant local authority within whose jurisdiction the development is proposed to take place. While under the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 600 of 2001) many farm developments are classed as “exempted development”, not all are. In either case it is a strict requirement of the TAMS support procedures that evidence of exemption be provided by the applicant or, in cases where planning consent is required, proof of such consent is necessary.

Where Development Consent is granted, it is subject to a range of “Conditions” tailored to the specific nature and location of the development, all in the context of ensuring sustainable development. In exceptional cases, such as where significant environmental effects are anticipated or where the development is likely to impact on protected sites (e.g. Natura 2000) or archaeological sites, a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required under the EIA Directive/Regulations and

possibly an associated Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive/Regulations, the latter in the context of protecting Natura 2000 sites.

In the case of intensive large scale animal husbandry facilities those above a certain threshold are required to apply for, and possess, an Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control licence (IPPC- now also known as Industrial Emissions Directive Licences) before they are permitted to operate. This licensing system is operated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators will include –

- total expenditure - €395 m
- No. of operations supported – 6,300 young farmers, 19,000 general farmers.

Monitoring

Monitoring of TAMS II is to be achieved through:

- farm inspections by the local office network of the Department;
- data collected in relation to nature and number of Planning Consents granted;
- planning Consent enforcement by the relevant local authority in cases where consent is required;
- the EPA in cases where an IPPC licence is required.

4.4.2 BIO ENERGY SCHEME

Context for intervention

Despite a near trebling in demand between 2003 and 2011 for renewable energy, there are still relatively low levels of production and use overall in Ireland. The contribution of renewable energy to overall energy demand in 2012 was 7.1%, whereas the target is to achieve 16% by 2020 under EU Directive 2009/28/EC. The Commission Climate and Energy policy framework from 2020 to 2030, published on 22/1/14, proposes a renewable energy target of 27% by 2030 (compared to 20% by 2020) with flexibility for individual member states to set national targets. There is a lack of market development for the bio-energy sector for a number of reasons, including the high investment costs required for energy sector development, lack of available finance, and difficulties with the development of the supply chain for bio-energy production, in terms of the need to better join up supply and demand.

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) estimate that optimised biomass availability in 2020, from the main sources such as the forest sector, domestic and industrial waste and agriculture residues, will be less than 60% of the biomass required to deliver the forecast bio-energy contribution to our 2020 renewable energy targets.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The greatest benefit to Ireland would be the offsetting of imported fossil fuels by indigenous biomass, with the local economy stimulated by money that would otherwise have left the country. There is the associated security of supply consideration due to the home grown nature of the fuel, the greater

diversification of fuel supplies and reduced dependence on imported fuels, particularly natural gas. There is the added benefit of providing an alternative farming enterprise and source of income for individual farmers, with the potential for additional employment in rural areas as supply chains develop and increasing areas of energy crops are established.

Selection of successful applicants would prioritise clear contractual evidence that the harvested crop will be used for renewable energy purposes within a defined minimum distance from where the crop is grown, the suitability of the site in terms of soil, access, agronomy, previous history of energy crop planting etc. It is also a requirement to demonstrate end-use links to facilities supported by any renewable heat incentive that may be introduced or biomass trade centre supported under the RDP.

Budget and Costings

€12 million would provide for establishing 10,000 hectares of crops from 2015-2020 (Based on an estimate of 500 beneficiaries provides for planting an average of 20 hectares per beneficiary over the 2015-2020 period).

Target groups

Individual farmers who show clear contractual evidence that the harvested crop will be used for renewable energy purposes within a defined minimum distance from where the crop is grown. Ideally with end-use links to facilities supported by any renewable heat incentive that may be introduced or biomass trade centre supported under the RDP.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Bio-Energy

The Bio-Energy Scheme provides establishment grants to farmers to grow Miscanthus (a tall bamboo-like grass) and Willow for the production of biomass suitable for use as a renewable source of energy. The Scheme aims to increase the production of Willow and Miscanthus in Ireland and to encourage alternative land use options. Eligible costs include those associated with ground preparation, fencing, vegetation control, the purchase of planting stock and planting. The minimum allowable area per applicant is 3 hectares and the maximum is 30 hectares. Importantly, applicants must submit evidence of linkages with end-users to use the biomass crop as a source of Bio-Energy. The Bio-Energy measure is consistent with the Government's Strategy for Renewable Energy '2012 - 2020'.

Bio-energy resources contribute to policy objectives in the energy, environmental, climate change mitigation, rural and regional development policies and for indigenous enterprise development. The energy/environment related benefits of growing biomass for use as fuel are several. Principal among these are carbon, wastewater management and biodiversity.

Carbon

One of the major drivers for growing Short Rotation Coppice (SRC) Willow and Miscanthus is their potential for the reduction of national GHG emissions. This reduction is achieved through: Carbon Mitigation and Carbon Sequestration.

Carbon mitigation:

- One hectare of SRC Willow or Miscanthus produces approximately the equivalent energy of 4.5m³ of light heating oil which equates to over 8 tonnes CO₂.
- Willow and Miscanthus are carbon neutral fuels, where carbon that is released during its combustion has been absorbed by the crop whilst growing.

- Biomass crops are a more positive influence on soil carbon levels due to reduced soil disturbance levels.

Carbon sequestration:

- Willow and Miscanthus can sequester carbon. Sequestration occurs when the inputs of carbon dioxide are greater than removals from harvesting and decomposition. (SRC Willow can sequester around 0.12 t of carbon/ha/yr.)

Wastewater Management

SRC Willow also has the ability to bio-remediate contaminated wastewaters or runoff and as such can form part of an integrated wastewater management programme on farms. For example when planted as buffer strips it can reduce nutrient and sediment runoff compared to other crops.

Biodiversity

Any change in land use from arable or grassland to Willow or Miscanthus will inevitably result in changes in the ecology/biodiversity of at least those fields directly concerned.

It has been demonstrated in various studies that these energy crops can support a wide diversity of invertebrates and birds in particular. In general, the overall effect on wildlife values, where these crops replace intensive agricultural production, is likely to be positive but where it replaces improved grassland, it will have little overall effect.

It can be an issue in some jurisdictions where the promotion of energy crops on a large scale has the knock-on effect of more land having to be brought into food production elsewhere, or intensified elsewhere, in order to make up for the resultant food crop displacement. Given the scale of the Irish bio-energy scheme and the relative productive land base available for food production in Ireland this is not regarded as a significant issue.

It is concluded that subject to the Best Practice Guidelines (as published by Teagasc) for the growing and harvesting of Willow and Miscanthus being followed the overall impact of the RDP in supporting this initiative is environmentally positive.

Some local, minor, landscape impacts will inevitably result through the changed visual pattern presented by these crops. However overall these changes are considered to be subjective and neutral (neither positive nor negative).

Summary of Environmental Implications

Firstly, and most importantly, the bio-energy scheme has the potential to deliver benefits in the context of climate change. Secondary environmental benefits include:

- protection of surface water and groundwater through the greater level of bio- absorption of contaminants originating from farm animals;
- potentially positive impacts on biodiversity, most notably invertebrates and birds, through the provision of additional types of habitats;
- positive impacts in maintaining rural populations through locally produced energy.

Subject to the mitigation measures described below there should be no adverse environmental impacts of note associated with this scheme.

In the broader context of promoting the use of bio-energy nationally, the measure facilitates the development of the downstream infrastructure necessary to utilise biomass. The existence of this infrastructure allows not only the energy crop biomass to be utilised but also provides an outlet for other agricultural wastes and for certain industrial and domestic wastes. As a consequence the measure has the capacity to provide an alternative, equally environmentally acceptable, disposal route for agricultural biomass wastes to that of composting.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Bio- Energy
SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity		<i>Positive</i>		
Population		<i>Positive</i>		
Human Health	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Fauna		<i>Positive</i>		
Flora		<i>Positive</i>		
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air		<i>Positive</i>		
Climatic Factors			<i>Positive</i>	
Material Assets		<i>Positive</i>		
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape	<i>None</i>			
Materials consumption		<i>Positive</i>		

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

From the above environmental impact analysis it is evident that no adverse impacts of consequence arise from the implementation of the Bio-Energy Scheme and that overall it has the potential to make a positive contribution to the environment. Consequently there would be no merit in adopting alternative approaches within this element of the RDP.

An additional, rather than alternative, Bio-Energy opportunity relating to agriculture that is worthy of consideration is that of anaerobic digestion of animal wastes. (See Section 6).

Mitigation measures to reduce the significance of the potential effect

The principal mitigation measure is the adherence by the Bio-Energy Scheme participants to the guidelines that have been produced in respect of both Willow and Miscanthus. These Best Practice Guidelines, produced by Teagasc, include details on the potential for adverse environmental effects and on how to manage, mitigate and/or avoid such impacts.

Indicators

- Level of uptake based on number of holdings / beneficiaries supported.

Monitoring

Each application under the scheme is recorded from application stage, pre-planting approval stage, payment claim stage for those who planted, and records maintained on total expenditure and areas planted per application. At any stage information in relation to how the measure is progressing is available as there is a dedicated unit within the Division with responsibility for administering the Bio-Energy Scheme.

4.5 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MEASURES

4.5.1 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER GROUPS

Context for Intervention

Increasing the knowledge base in the sector can contribute to increased efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness by addressing knowledge gaps in areas such as financial and risk management, grass management practices and animal health and welfare. Similarly, knowledge transfer in relation to environmental and climate change issues will contribute to the development of a more sustainable sector.

Discussion Groups currently operate in the sector as a vehicle for knowledge transfer. Discussion Groups involving some 10,000 participating farmers (7,000 beef and 3,000 sheep farmers) are currently running and are primarily focussed on profitability and herd health issues.

Purpose and Approach Taken

DAFM is considering innovative delivery solutions that will go beyond the traditional approach followed in the existing discussion groups and where possible to avail of additional expertise such as that of veterinary practitioners. This measure also takes into account the need for increased best practice and knowledge transfer in relation to environmental issues highlighted in the Environmental Analysis of Food Harvest 2020.

The scheme objectives will be to contribute to knowledge acquisition and the adoption of best practice in the sector. This will serve to improve the profitability of participants' enterprises by focusing on selected areas of farm level performance including those associated with:

- financial management;
- grassland management;
- herd health;
- sustainability; and
- animal breeding/welfare.

Areas to be Funded

The proposed areas for the establishment of Knowledge Transfer Groups are grouped in priority order as follows:

Priority Bundle 1

- Dairy expanders and new entrants – focused on animal health, financial management, grass management, sustainability (carbon navigator), milk recording, breeding.
- Beef and sheep - focused on animal health, financial management, grass management, sustainability (carbon navigator), breeding.
- Pig / Poultry – focused on animal health and welfare and manure management.
- Equine – focused on breeding and animal health and welfare.

Priority Bundle 2

- Dairy other - focused on animal health, financial management, grass management, sustainability (carbon navigator)
- Tillage – focused on integrated pest management and profit monitor.

These groups may be linked to other proposed RDP measures. For example, participation in beef sector Knowledge Transfer Groups may be linked to participation in the Beef Data and Genomics measure. Decisions in relation to which areas to support will be linked to both DAFM priorities and available funding.

It is expected that knowledge transfer will also promote good crop husbandry practises and assist in the achievement of the targets outlined in the Tillage Sector Development Plan compiled by the Teagasc “Tillage Crop Stakeholder Consultative Group”.

Budget and Costings

Costings are currently being developed in line with the Rural Development Regulation. These will include participant’s costs for travel, per diem expenses and replacement farmer costs . The overall financial allocation for the RDP period is anticipated to be €100m over the lifetime of the RDP.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Priority Bundles 1 and 2

From an environmental perspective Priority Bundles 1 and 2 have a number of important elements. These include: grass management, manure management, integrated pest management, sustainability (carbon management), risk management, animal health and welfare, and breeding. Many of these are overlapping issues and some are the subject of existing specific guidance of particular environmental relevance.

Grassland Management

Teagasc produces a range of guidance and advice notes on grassland management. The knowledgeable application of these has the potential to deliver environmental benefits through, for example, the avoidance of overgrazing, and avoidance of excessive application of fertilizers and slurry.

Integrated Pest Management

The incorrect use of pesticides has the potential to have both immediate and long term adverse implications for human health and the environment. Environmental impacts can include contamination of water supplies, build up in the human food chain and reductions in biodiversity. A key Directive in managing the use of pesticides in a sustainable way is Sustainable use of Pesticides Directive 2009/128/EC. Among other requirements this Directive includes the requirement that Member States develop and apply a National Action Plan for their sustainable use. Such a plan, “The National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides” has been published by DAFM in 2013.

A “Carbon Navigator”

This is a software based tool developed and promoted by Teagasc and Bord Bia (The Irish Food Board) for the reduction and mitigation of GHG emissions. It is designed for use at individual farm level.

Animal Health and Welfare

The potential environmental impacts in the case of Animal Health and Welfare is described under “Proposed Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health and Welfare (AHW)” below.

Summary of Environmental Implications

The objective of Priority Bundles 1 and 2 is to improve overall farming practice by the transfer and propagation of knowledge, including environmental knowledge and best practice, at local level and by extension, throughout the farming community. These core objectives have the potential to make an important contribution to both the efficiency and quality of farming activity in Ireland. While improved efficiency has the potential to increase output, and hence raise the environmental footprint of agriculture overall, its close linkage to environmental knowledge and environmental best practice has the potential to greatly increase the depth and quality of the application of environment protection and enhancement at individual farm level. This can be regarded as a positive impact on the primary environmental receptors of farming activity, namely soil, surface water, ground-water, biodiversity and climate (the latter in the context of GHG emissions). Key environmental benefits that can result from this approach include the following:

- Effective management of land through appropriate grazing, fertilizer application, and pesticide use are all positive environmental outcomes. Sustainable land management also enhances and protects the long term use and value of land as a Material Asset.
- As the sustainable use of pesticides is a complex issue with potentially significant impacts in the event of misuse, targeted Knowledge Transfer in this field can provide critical skills that benefit and protect human health and the environment.
- The scheme design will have a more enhanced focus on environmental and climate change issues reflecting the multifunctional role of agriculture. In particular, the proposal to roll out the carbon navigator to a large number of farmers in these groups will be a clear link to the climate change objective.
- The focus on best practice in all aspects of farming means that participants in such groups are more likely to farm in a way that complies with environmental requirements including maintaining biodiversity.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Knowledge Transfer Group - Priority Bundles 1 and 2

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity			<i>Positive</i>	
Population	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Human Health			<i>Positive</i>	
Fauna			<i>Positive</i>	
Flora			<i>Positive</i>	
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air		<i>Positive</i>		
Climatic Factors			<i>Positive</i>	
Material Assets		<i>Positive</i>		
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape	<i>None</i>			
Materials consumption		<i>Positive</i>		

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

Since the environmental consequences are considered to be overwhelmingly positive the consideration of alternatives is not relevant in this instance.

Mitigation

While supports for the development of agriculture aimed at increased efficiency also increase output and potentially associated negative environmental implications the driver of that proposed increase is knowledge based. It is apparent from the nature of the knowledge transfer elements that most involve and closely link Best Agricultural Practice with Best Environmental Practice and of itself acts as a powerful mitigation measure.

Performance Indicators

- Expenditure - €100
- Total number of participants trained - 30,000 farmers, each trained for on average 3 years under various KT Groups.

Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of progress will be achieved through the use of predetermined reporting arrangements with each Knowledge Transfer Group. This will encompass appropriate monitoring arrangements on individual performance.

4.5.2 EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Context for intervention

The challenge of meeting the forecast for additional food demand and producing more from less in a sustainable fashion is considerable. European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) will play a significant role in this regard and can act as a catalyst for change, thereby helping to bring grassroots innovative ideas to implementation using an interactive and bottom up approach.

Support for EIP operational groups is integrated with a number of other proposed measures in the new RDP, e.g. EIP operational groups can feed into the wider delivery of agri-environment and climate change measures or underpin the linking of innovative practice to production methods via the proposed Beef Data and Genomics measure.

Current and future research, and the adaptation of it, can play an important part in nurturing best practice in a wide range of areas such as maximising nutrient efficiencies, reducing emissions, informing adaptation and mitigating impacts of climate change. The EIP on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability can encourage the alignment of research to the needs of end-users. It is anticipated that EIPs will fill the current gap between farmers, rural enterprises, and advisors, on the one hand, and science on the other to allow the sector to take full advantage of innovation to produce more with less.

Support for EIP operational groups will also reflect some of the themes emerging from the environmental assessment of Food Harvest 2020.

Purpose and Approach Taken

It is expected that EIPs could play an important part in nurturing best practice in a wide range of areas such as maximising nutrient efficiencies, reducing emissions, informing adaptation and mitigating impacts of climate change. EIP operational groups will allow the main actors – e.g. farmers, NGOs, private sector bodies, research institutions etc. to establish partnership approaches to identifying practical and implementable solutions to problems relating to the above. The groups will integrate the different perspectives of these actors in the interest of linking research with resulting innovative and best practice.

In summary the purpose of the EIPs is to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and help the Irish agricultural sector to become more productive and efficient by:

- supporting operational groups to address issues in areas such as environment and climate change, biodiversity and sustainable production;
- bringing together farmers, NGOs, private sector bodies, research institutions and advisors in a partnership type approach to address challenges identified;
- disseminating information through appropriate channels including the EIP Network.

Following on from the consultation process, it is now envisaged that support for EIP operational groups is to be channelled towards the setting up of new operational groups structured around a competitive fund. This would entail DAFM, in consultation with external stakeholders, identifying priority issues as a basis for a call for proposals. Such a call for proposals, and the subsequent evaluation of proposals received would necessarily draw on the relevant expertise.

Currently it is expected that once priority areas/issues are identified a call for proposals and selection of project proposals will follow based on following well-established public procurement principles.

The dissemination of the research findings through the EIP Network will ensure that the lessons learned are communicated beyond local level and thereby contribute to the overall objectives of sustainable agriculture production across the EU.

Budget and Costings

It is proposed to provide a total of €4million for the EIP measure over the period of the RDP. Costs eligible for support include feasibility studies, animation costs, running costs, and promotion activities.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Elements (a), (b) and (c)

It is clear that Element (a) actions with its focus on locally led Agri-Environment projects has the potential to deliver positive environmental outcomes. The environmental mediums to be impacted upon will be dependent on the nature of the specific projects, as will the scale and importance of the resultant impacts. Irrespective of the nature and scale of the particular EIP projects however it is reasonable to conclude that there is little possibility for anything other than positive environmental impacts resulting from Element (a).

Element (b) “Beef Genomics and Data Programme” (BGDP) is assessed under that specific theme heading later in this report. There are no specific identifiable environmental implications that can be associated with, as yet undefined, Element (c).

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

As the environmental assessment of Element (a) is found to have a strong environmental focus with a consequent positive environmental impact and Element (c) to have an impact that may be positive, or at worst neutral, it is considered that the issue of consideration of alternatives within the RDP is not relevant in the context of avoiding, reducing or mitigating their likely environmental effects.

Mitigation

For the same reasons as in the consideration of alternatives above, the issue of mitigation of the impacts for these elements does not arise.

Performance Indicators

Performance indicators for the EIPs include:

- Expenditure - €5m
- Total number operational groups to be supported, established and operating 10

Monitoring

While the delivery of EIP operational groups will necessitate input from across the Department, the responsibility for delivery of these operational groups will be located in a single division which will oversee the 3 main elements of the suite of Knowledge Transfer measures in the RDP. This division will oversee the operation of each group and will be responsible for ensuring appropriate oversight.

4.5.3 CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADVISORS

Context for Intervention

Participation in continuing professional development activities will ensure farm advisors appropriately up-skill and ensure that they are familiar with the latest techniques and regulatory requirements in a rapidly changing agricultural industry. It will promote the development of knowledgeable, professional and competent advisors, and thereby enhance the quality of service provided to farmers.

Additionally the success of a number of measures proposed under the RDP, including GLAS and Knowledge Transfer Groups, will build on suitably qualified advisors dispensing up-to-date advice to farmers. Continued Professional Development (CPD) will ensure that advisors are properly trained in priority areas identified by DAFM such as climate change mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity management.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The purpose of CPD is to enhance the skills of advisors through delivery of targeted training courses across a range of measures and therefore to:

- improve their technical skills;
- enhance their regulatory knowledge; and
- develop their client facing skills.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is to be €2m. A maximum amount of €200,000 over 3 years will apply for the delivery of this CPD by any one provider. These provisional costings will include operating costs, personnel costs, training costs, and travel costs for course providers.

Target groups

CPD will be targeted at advisors across disciplines who will be engaged in the delivery of GLAS and Knowledge Transfer Groups. Together with the traditional agricultural advisor, it may include personnel from the veterinary, financial and environmental streams.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to CPD

Despite significant progress being made nationally over the past decade in moving towards the goal of more sustainable agriculture, biodiversity continues to decline. There are various measures and initiatives within the proposed RDP aimed at halting that decline. The success of those measures is dependent of the appropriate knowledge and skills being available and effectively targeted. This can only be achieved by the continual upgrading and up-skilling of those persons charged with delivering that knowledge to the farming community. As is proposed, the CPD will involve a wide range of disciplines, including financial disciplines, and will not simply be confined to those more obvious or mainstream “environment” related themes. The importance of finance lies in that it is a necessary prerequisite of any environmental measure implemented at farm level to be economically viable if it is to succeed, i.e. for it to be “sustainable”.

In summary it is apparent that the CPD for advisors will be fundamental to the successful implementation of the GLAS and Knowledge Transfer measures of the RDP. It can be readily concluded therefore that the environmental impact of CPD will be entirely positive and that in its absence the goal of sustainable agriculture would be compromised.

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

Given the pivotal role of CPD in delivering an overall positive environmental outcome of RDP the issue of adopting alternatives to this element of the programme does not arise.

Mitigation

There is no adverse environmental dimension to CPD. Consequently, mitigation measures are not relevant in this instance.

Performance Indicators

The key indicators for the implementation of CPD are:

- expenditure: €2m;
- number of training courses provided: 500;
- number of advisors trained: 1,500.

Monitoring

A dedicated Knowledge Transfer/Innovation section will be established to oversee the delivery of the suite of KT measures, including CPD. This will ensure that appropriate oversight and control mechanisms are in place. Data will be collected on an ongoing basis regarding the number of courses provided, the number of advisors in attendance and the subjects/topics covered.

4.5.4 TARGETED ADVISORY SERVICE ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Context for intervention

Given the high financial costs associated with animal diseases there is a strong economic rationale for targeting investment at efforts to manage and eliminate them. Increased animal health and welfare will feed into the increased efficiency and competitiveness that underlies the Food Harvest 2020 strategy.

Purpose of the Approach Taken

This proposed measure will complement the animal health element in the proposed Knowledge Transfer groups and will use approved trainers, including trained veterinary practitioners. The advice offered will be farm-specific to individual farmers on request.

As the measure is aimed at addressing diseases with a national distribution, the relevant region is the entire national territory.

The measure will strategically target a number of core areas for the control of diseases such as Johne's disease¹, BVD², SCC³ and PRRS⁴. The savings to Irish agriculture arising from the eradication of these diseases is very substantial, amounting to some €200m or more per annum.

Note:

1. Johne's disease is a chronic infectious disease caused by a bacterium. It is highly contagious and causes cattle to gradually lose condition and finally die. It is regulated by the Johne's Disease Order, 1955(S.I. No. 86 of 1955).
2. BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea) is a highly contagious viral disease of cattle. It is estimated that approximately 80-90% of Irish herds have been exposed to BVD virus. The cost to fertility, calf health and overall production makes BVD one of the most costly diseases on a dairy farm.

3. SCC (Somatic Cell Count). SCC- dairy cow mastitis- can result in serious economic losses in the dairy cattle population as a result of impaired animal welfare and consumer concerns.
4. PRRS (Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome) is a viral disease in pigs, it also known as blue-ear disease.

Budget and Costings

Overall financial allocation for RDP period is expected to be €6m.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to AHW Proposals

Animal health and welfare is subject to the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013. A focus on Animal Welfare has the obvious merit of improving the quality of life of farm animals but is of no notable “environmental” consequence. The focus on Animal Health however has an important environmental dimension in two respects. Firstly closely managed animal health has the potential to ensure the appropriate, controlled and measured use of veterinary products. For example, it has been established that some complex chemical substances used in maintaining animal health (e.g. in managing certain gut parasites) are of necessity poisonous and can persist for a period in animal manures and in the environment and potentially affect human health. Similarly unnecessary use or over dependence on antibiotics through poor animal health management can undermine the long term antimicrobial effectiveness of these important agents. Secondly, it is evident that where diseases are inadequately identified and controlled in their early stages they can rapidly spread and have serious social, economic and environmental consequences. This is apparent from previous outbreaks of animal disease such as bovine tuberculosis and foot and mouth disease. While the animal health measures indicated in the RPD do not specifically mention these latter two diseases it is clear that ready access to expert animal health advice can provide an opportunity for early detection and isolation of all contagious diseases. Apart from the obvious social and economic consequences of a major disease outbreak they also present significant environmental challenges and threats as a result of having to dispose of large numbers of infected animal carcasses. Such disposal has implications for landfill capacity, groundwater pollution and air borne pollution (the latter from burning of carcasses).

It is concluded on the basis of the above that all of the AHW proposals have the potential to have positive environmental benefits.

Mitigation

There are no adverse environmental impacts associated with improving animal health and welfare. Consequently, the issue of mitigation does not arise.

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicator is:

- expenditure €4m

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

As only positive environmental impacts are likely to result from the AHW measures the matter of consideration of alternatives or changes to the RDP does not arise in this instance.

Monitoring

The relevant national database (currently –the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation - ICBF) will hold information on the number of completed interventions between the trained specialist advisor and the farmer, and on the outcome of these. This information will be directly accessible by AHW Division, allowing the required information to be gathered centrally. Paper records will also be maintained by trained advisors and by farmers.

Summary of Environmental Implications of Knowledge Transfer Measures

From the above environmental impact analysis it is evident that no notable adverse impacts of consequence have been identified. This is particularly so given the knowledge based focus of the Theme, including environmental elements, and the significant monetary resources to be applied in achieving its aims.

The expenditure on knowledge based actions under the Programmes will require a “value for money” (VFM) analysis at regular intervals, or at least as a mid-term evaluation. That VFM analysis will of necessity be required to look at the effectiveness of Theme 4 in delivering its stated objectives. As many of the objectives have a positive environmental action at their core the degree to which they have been achieved, as measured in the VFM, will serve to measure both the environmental effects and the effectiveness of the Programme. In addition, at a subsidiary level, actions such as the creation of European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) will, as with all adequately constructed partnerships, have in-built measures to monitor progress in achieving its various pre-stated objectives, expenditure limits etc.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Knowledge Transfer
SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity			<i>Positive</i>	
Population			<i>Positive</i>	
Human Health	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Fauna			<i>Positive</i>	
Flora			<i>Positive</i>	
Soil			<i>Positive</i>	
Water			<i>Positive</i>	
Air	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Climatic Factors		<i>Positive</i>		
Material Assets		<i>Positive</i>		
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Landscape		<i>Positive</i>		
Materials consumption		<i>Positive</i>		

4.6 COLLABORATIVE AND QUALITY FOCUSED MEASURES

4.6.1 SUPPORT FOR COLLABORATIVE FARMING

Context for intervention

The level of farm partnerships in Ireland is very low relative to many of our competitors. Currently the only form of farm partnership provided for within the suite of agriculture legislation is Milk Production Partnerships. Such partnerships were introduced in 2002. Today there are approximately 600 Milk Production Partnerships (MPPs) in existence in Ireland, and of this total, roughly 430 are child/parent partnerships.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The overriding objective of this measure is to encourage greater engagement by the farming community with the concept of collaborative farming, and in particular farm partnerships. The measure will be aimed at those farmers who are proposing to establish a new Farm Partnership (or some other acceptable collaborative arrangement). It is aimed at attracting partnerships across the full range of agricultural activity (cereals, beef, sheep, as well as dairying) and across a range of collaborative arrangements (e.g. share farming, calf rearing, land leasing, as well as farm partnerships). Beneficiaries may be required to participate in an appropriate Knowledge Transfer Programme.

Providing support for increased levels of collaborative farming will have a number of benefits, including:

- entering a partnership offers farmers increased returns through the ability to achieve scale at a lower capital cost; the reduction of costs, which are duplicated between farmers; and risk sharing;
- land mobility: - access to land is a critical constraint facing the dairy sector. Collaborative farming arrangements offer a new route to access land;
- skills – Partnerships offer the possibility of sharing best farming and business management practice;
- social benefits -Joint farming ventures can help to address the social challenge of the ‘one man farm’ model making farming a more attractive occupation.

Budget and Costings

It is proposed that this measure should make a contribution (50%- up to a maximum of €2,500) to legal and other administrative set up costs associated with developing a Registered Farm Partnership. Overall financial allocation for RDP period is to be €3m.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Collaborative Farming

This element of the RDP essentially promotes collaborative farming at all levels of activity and arrangements, ranging from land leasing to farm machinery contract hire. The improved work practices and knowledge sharing, efficiencies and economy of land use that will ensue from the shared skills, assets and experience should result in lower transport/fuel use, lower water wastage and more efficient use of electricity. These increases in efficiency will make a small but valuable contribution to the improvement of the environment and consequently to the objective of sustainable development. Additional, minor, positive impacts could potentially be improved human (mental) health through increased social interaction that a partnership entails and a consequent reduction of farmer isolation, an issue in some rural locations (for this reason the summary matrix for Theme 5 is rated as of “Some Significance” for Human Health).

Other than in the case of some joint undertaking or shared contract with an environmental dimension such as land drainage, collaborative farming has little or no potential to adversely impact on the natural environment. In some circumstances such works may require formal consent. For example, depending on the scale and location of land drainage, use of semi-natural areas for intensive agriculture, and restructuring of rural holdings, EIA may be required in accordance with the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations S.I. 456, 2011). The requirement is based on the scale and location of the development. It applies irrespective of the activity being carried out collaboratively or otherwise. . This coupled with other elements of the RDP, most notably the Knowledge Transfer measures should negate any such risk (as noted above beneficiaries may be required to participate in an appropriate Knowledge Transfer Programme).

Mitigation

Well considered and operated collaborative farming has little or no potential to have any negative environmental implications. Consequently, no specific mitigation measures are considered necessary.

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators are:

- expenditure €3m

- number of collaborative operations supported 1200

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

Given the predicted absence of any negative environmental impacts of note the consideration of alternative approaches is unnecessary.

Monitoring

Dedicated resources will be assigned to the development of the new Register of Farm Partnerships and the implementation of this measure will form part of this structure. As there are no negative environmental impacts anticipated this register will be used for administrative purposes only and need not serve in providing derived environmental data.

4.6.2 ARTISAN FOOD COOPERATION SCHEME

The Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme is to be assigned to the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) element, LEADER. As in the past LEADER will continue to be delivered via the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. For editorial reasons the Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme is addressed below.

Context for intervention

Food Harvest 2020 has identified the need for improved marketing of local food and uptake of EU quality systems. A number of specific challenges have been identified which underlie the need for intervention in this areas, including entry barriers, the need for shared understanding, skills/training, marketing and business skills deficits.

Purpose and Approach Taken

The approach proposed here is to provide support for collaborative proposals which seek to improve product quality, enhance relevant skills, and improve access to relevant markets. Applicants must be registered food producers and propose a joint plan to improve market knowledge and insight, product quality, production sustainability and/or marketing of their food products and developing new and innovative routes to market.

The proposed scheme will consist of annual grant support for collaborative proposals and activities to assist artisan food producers to:

- Improve and validate production quality; to increase laboratory testing and improve access to best practice through advice, workshops, farm visits and exchanges.
- Improve awareness and marketability of locality and niche category products through access to market insight, support for developing routes to market, identifying and exploiting on-line publicity and sales opportunities, developing presence at food festivals, networking and clustering to provide impact in terms of food trails, and centres of food excellence through improved access to best practice.

Budget and Costings

LEADER is to be allocated a total of some €250m, of which €15m is to be shared between the Artisan Food Support and the Regional Product Development supports.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to the Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme

The development, production and promotion of artisan foods is generally regarded as socially desirable promoting as it does collaboration, sharing of knowledge and enhanced social interaction, all usually at a local level. The inherent attraction of artisan foods for customers is that they are regarded as meeting the highest of quality standards and must be produced in a manner that is environmentally acceptable and sustainable. Consequently the successful promotion of this theme has no potential for significant adverse environmental impacts.

Mitigation

There are no adverse environmental impacts anticipated, consequently the need for mitigation does not arise.

Performance Indicators

- expenditure
- No. of cooperative projects supported

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

There are no adverse impacts anticipated, consequently the need for consideration of alternatives does not arise

Monitoring

To be monitored under LEADER.

4.6.3 REGIONAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Regional Product Development Support is to be assigned to the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) element, LEADER. As in the past LEADER will continue to be delivered via the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. For editorial reasons the Artisan Food Cooperation Scheme is addressed below.

Context for intervention

The importance of quality assurance schemes was noted in the SWOT analysis. In addition, the benefits of collaborative approaches to particular issues is a theme in the development of the new RDP. This proposed measure will marry these two elements by providing support for group proposals aimed at primary producers implementing quality schemes (with a particular focus on the beef and lamb sector, but open to other sectors also).

Purpose and Approach Taken

Quality schemes will work to address specific issues identified for primary producers in attempting to improve their competitiveness. The collaborative element of the measure will encourage producers to address particular barriers which would be more difficult to overcome as single operators.

It is proposed to provide grant support for developing Group proposals for marketing of distinctive local agricultural products and foodstuffs, particularly beef and lamb and/or for registration and promotion of products under the EU Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), and Traditional Specialty Guarantee (TSG) quality regimes. Such activities carry costs in terms of developing a group dynamic, agreeing specification and control protocols and marketing. The Bord Bia initiative, the "Origin Green" programme, also has a role to play here.

Budget and Costings

LEADER is to be allocated a total of some €250m, of which €15m is to be shared between the Artisan Food Support and the Regional Product Development supports.

Monitoring

To be monitored under LEADER

Environmental Considerations in Relation to Support for Quality Schemes

The concept of quality can extend beyond the established norms of, for example, freshness and taste. Increasingly “quality” is regarded as extending to include aspects such as freedom from residual chemicals, production in an environmentally responsible manner and with due regard to animal health and welfare. Consequently the promotion of quality at all levels of the food production chain can be regarded as having little or no potential for adverse environmental impacts. Furthermore, given an appropriate level of emphasis on the verifiable environmental credentials of foods the scheme has the potential to provide some minor positive environmental benefits. Participation in the EU regulated, PGI and TSG schemes for the promotion and protection of quality agricultural products and foodstuffs (and to be promoted by the RDP) also have the potential to result in some environmental benefits.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Support for Collaborative and Quality Focused Actions

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Population	<i>None</i>			
Human Health		<i>Positive</i>		
Fauna	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Flora	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Soil	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Water	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Air	<i>None</i>			
Climatic Factors	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Material Assets	<i>None</i>			
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Materials consumption	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			

Consideration of Alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

The above environmental impact analysis suggests that minor positive environment related benefits are likely to result from the Theme 5 proposals. Importantly, no adverse impacts of consequence have been identified that would warrant alternative approaches to be adopted in the RDP.

Mitigation measures to reduce the significance of the potential effect

As all environmental impacts under the above analysis are deemed to be minor but positive, no mitigation measures are required.

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators are:

- Expenditure;
- no. of holdings supported;
- no. of cooperative projects supported.

Monitoring proposals to measure the environmental effects of the Theme

The Theme does not have objectives that could be classed as “environmental objectives” and only minor indirect environmental impacts (all positive) will likely result. Consequently it is not considered that specific monitoring proposals are necessary in this instance. Monitoring of the uptake and effectiveness of the Theme under the overall management of the RDP may yield some incidental environmental data of merit.

4.7 TARGETED SUPPORT

4.7.1 BEEF GENOMICS AND DATA PROGRAMME (BDGP)

Context for Intervention

Ireland has the fourth largest beef cow herd in the EU and specialist beef production is the predominant type of farming enterprise in the country. The long-term strategy for the development of the sector envisages a 20% increase in output value by 2020 (using the 2007-09 average as a baseline). This goal is based on a consensus among stakeholders that future growth in the sector can best be achieved by improving output efficiency, quality and sustainability rather than simply increasing numbers. Genetic advances and genomics offer the potential to deliver greater profitability at farm level through enhanced productivity and identifying desirable product qualities that will add value in the marketplace. Using genomics to increase genetic improvement in cattle, Ireland can further exploit its advantage of a grass-based production system and in terms of traceability and quality assurance.

However, the agriculture sector overall makes a significant contribution to Ireland's total national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Under the recently published Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development Bill 2014 the Government has unequivocally committed Ireland to meeting all present and future binding International targets on reduction of emissions of GHGs, including the target to achieve a 20% reduction in the non-ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) sectors of the economy (which includes agriculture) by 2020. It proposes successive National Low Carbon Roadmaps at least every 5 years up to 2050 with sectoral mitigation strategies and targets for each period. It also proposes sectoral adaptation plans to enable each sector to adapt to the effects of climate change. It allows for the Expert Advisory Body to undertake periodic reviews to ensure progress is maintained and that climate policy is up to date with the latest scientific, technological and policy developments. It commits each minister responsible for sectoral mitigation and adaptation plans to report on progress to Dail Eireann annually and to outline additional measures if progress has not been sufficiently effective. As an important contribution to meeting the targets, the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government has advocated a goal of carbon neutrality in Agriculture whereby emissions will be neutralised by advances in technology, including more efficient agricultural techniques.

The draft RDP is supportive of this approach and proposes that the most effective response is a targeted measure that will deliver an accelerated improvement in the quality of the beef herd through the application of genomics technology. This will help farmers to maximise productivity in a sustainable way, while supporting improved quality and traceability in the national suckler herd.

Budget and Costings

While specific costings are still being finalised as part of the design process, it is estimated that the actions required under the measure will form the basis for a programme rising to , €52 million per annum. The overall financial allocation for RDP period is expected to be €295m.

The beneficial outputs of the measure are:

- support for the establishment of an Economic Breeding Index (allows farmers to identify quality issues at birth and select the highest quality animals);
- support for weight gain in beef (BDGP will encourage a higher rate of more efficient animals in terms of conversion of inputs to weight, thus reducing necessary retention periods);
- extended grazing (BDGP will foster confidence in the sector and thus encourage continued adherence to traditional grass based model).

These findings are also consistent with the marginal cost abatement curve developed by the International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC). This approach is consistent with the overarching FH2020 strategy as the relevant target for the beef sector is value based rather than volume based. The BDGP will underpin increasingly efficient stock rather than increased numbers.

In terms of greenhouse gas emission, genomics will be a key tool in improving fertility and reducing age at slaughter in beef animals. Both of these will reduce the levels of enteric (gut) methane emissions, which are essentially dependent on animal numbers, through: (i) the reduction in the size of the suckler herd and (ii) the provision of beef animals more quickly, without raising the numbers in the standing herd. The measure supports efficiency gains which can help reduce carbon emissions per unit output which deliver benefits directly to the farmer in terms of output and financial return as well as to the environment as the efficiency of production systems improve.

The proposed measures will contribute to the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation cross-cutting objective, as set out above. Minimisation of GHG emissions in the agriculture sector can be assisted through a matching of improved breeding technologies with new grazing technologies - the measure therefore provides the potential for further positive developments in this area in the coming years.

Environmental Considerations in Relation to BDGP

Beef sector data and genomics has as its objective the improvement of both production efficiency and quality of the animals produced. “Efficiency” can be defined as the production of the same quantity of “product” utilising less “inputs” (resources) without compromising quality. Improved efficiency therefore results in a lower level of materials and/or resource consumption per unit of production. This is regarded as a positive environmental impact in the context of “Materials Consumption”.

If the same level of resources to production as is currently applied remains unchanged then the consequence of increased production efficiency would be that the overall size of the national herd increases. This would result in a corresponding increase in the quantity of animal waste arising for disposal and of the quantities of greenhouse gases (GHG), notably ammonia, generated. Ireland’s emission ceiling for ammonia is 116 kt and this was achieved in 2003 and remains below the target. The agriculture sector (cattle population) accounts for virtually all ammonia emissions in Ireland. If cattle numbers were to increase to their pre-2000 levels then ammonia levels would rise and could become problematic.

However, as emphasised in the objectives presented in the draft RDP, the BDGP element “will underpin increasingly efficient stock rather than increased numbers”. This objective is also consistent with that of Food Harvest 2020. Consequently the issue of the measure increasing the size of the national herd giving rise to an increase in the potential environmental footprint, including the national GHG emissions footprint, from agricultural sources does not arise.

It has been noted in both the RDP as proposed and in the environmental assessment of the Food Harvest 2020 plan that improved efficiency, including altered and improved diet, coupled with genomics has the potential to reduce the GHG emissions on a per head basis. While there are various recent scientific publications that support this view there is as yet no firm evidence regarding what scale of benefits these actions might achieve. This is particularly the case in respect of “diet” as the RDP has little or no influence on the feeding regimes adopted by individual farmers. Even in accepting this reservation as to the scale of the GHG reduction that can be achieved it is apparent nonetheless that the BDGP measure has the capacity to make a positive contribution of some significance in regard to climate.

The introduction of genomics on dairy breeding has helped identify the most suitable type of animal suited to Irish grass-based production conditions. A similar programme is being planned for beef production, allowing for the identification of animal types suited to our unique natural production conditions. A grass-based beef production system is less resource intensive (e.g. consumption of artificial fertilizers and feeds) than other production systems and can be rightly regarded as “green” production.

The BDGP also supports traceability and quality, aspects which further its eligibility to be branded under the “Origin Green” initiative. Origin Green is a food development programme promoted by Bord Bia to internationally demonstrate sustainability in terms of greenhouse gas emission, energy conservation, water management, waste, biodiversity, community initiatives and health and nutrition. It is a voluntary, membership based programme and to qualify producers must be in a position to prove their “green production” claims through a credible means of measurement and verification. A consequence of participating in the Origin Green initiative is the clear linkage of an economic return at farm level to environmental sustainability at a wider level. In respect of this aspect of the programme the measure is considered as having a degree of environmentally positive outcomes for the “natural environment” (water, biodiversity etc.).

This activity also helps maximise the “Material Assets” that the genetic resource of the national herd represents.

The environmental receptors most likely to be impacted upon are presented in the matrix below.

Targeted Supports – Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

	None/Minor Significance	Some Significance	Significant	Uncertain
Biodiversity	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Population	<i>None</i>			
Human Health	<i>None</i>			
Fauna	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Flora	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Soil	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Water	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Air	<i>Minor (positive)</i>			
Climatic Factors		<i>Positive</i>		
Material Assets			<i>Positive</i>	
Cultural Heritage (Archaeology, architecture)	<i>None</i>			
Landscape	<i>None</i>			
Materials consumption			<i>Positive</i>	

Consideration of Alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

The above environmental impact analysis suggests that some positive environmental related benefits are likely to result from the these proposals. Importantly, no adverse impacts of consequence have been identified that would warrant alternative approaches to be adopted in the RDP.

Mitigation measures to reduce the significance of the potential effect

As all environmental impacts under the above analysis are deemed to be either none or positive to varying degrees, no mitigation measures are required.

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators referenced in the programme are:

- expenditure – €295m;
- number of farmers trained in interpretation of genomic results;
- number of holdings supported.

Monitoring

Payment of aid grants will be dependent on full compliance with the terms and conditions of the BGDP. In common with all such supports, the BGDP will be administered and controlled by DAFM using information obtained from its Animal Identification and Movement system. It is also proposed that monitoring includes on-farm inspections.

4.8 LEADER

Context for Intervention

As a community led local development approach to rural development, LEADER has formed part of the policy framework for rural development in Ireland since its inception in the 1990s. In the 2007-2013 programming period LEADER was the main method of the delivery of interventions aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas and supporting the diversification of the rural economy. It has proven to be an effective tool for supporting the economic and social development of rural communities by providing the resources necessary for communities to support their own development.

Purpose and Approach Taken

LEADER aims to support the sustainable economic and social development of rural Ireland. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) manages LEADER implementation in Ireland.. All LEADER measures will be centrally administered via that Department's Rural Development Division (which includes Agricultural Inspectors on secondment from DAFM).

The continuation of the LEADER approach in rural areas is seen as critical for the future development of rural Ireland. Ireland is currently moving towards a more integrated approach to the delivery of Local Development interventions in general and the participation of communities is central to the implementation of this approach. Rural communities are best placed to identify and address the issues and challenges they face and the LEADER approach is an essential tool to facilitate this in rural Ireland.

In the context of a more integrated approach to rural development for the future and in order to address the challenges identified from the 2007-2013 programming period the delivery mechanisms for the 2014-2020 will change. The precise nature of these changes have yet to be determined however the new system will adhere to regulatory requirements and support the community led local development approach.

LEADER will continue to be delivered via the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The precise projects to be supported will emerge from the bottom up approach via the development of Local Development Strategies. However, a number of central themes have emerged from consultations to date which will provide a framework for the development of these Local Development Strategies. These themes include:

- Rural Economic Development / Enterprise Development / Job Creation incorporating rural tourism, enterprise development, broadband training and rural towns;
- Social inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation; and
- Rural environment.

Innovation is one of the cornerstones of the LEADER approach and experience in the current programming period would indicate a high level of participation in projects that support environmental protection and awareness in rural communities. This is expected to continue to be the case.

Budget and Costings

A total of €250m is to be allocated to LEADER

Environmental Considerations in Relation to LEADER

While much of the detail of the LEADER measure remains to be elaborated, sufficient detail, including that of past performance, is available to evaluate the environmental dimension likely to be associated with it. The environmental implications of the Artisan Food Support and the Regional Product Development Support elements of LEADER have, for editorial reasons, already been addressed under their respective sub-headings earlier in this report.

The primary objective of the measure, to have a community led local development approach to rural development, supports the creation of local sustainable employment in small enterprises. In most instances that employment will be linked to local material assets and resources. This of itself helps to contribute to sustainable development as it is less likely to necessitate the importation of materials, associated transport etc. The creation of locally based employment also avoids employees having to commute long distances to work.

A very wide range of diverse projects can be expected to be supported by LEADER. Some, but not all (e.g. development of walking trails), of those projects will involve construction, either to provide new facilities or upgraded facilities, for the project in question. In such cases development consent under the Planning and Development Regulations 2000-2012 will be required from the relevant planning authority (the local authority). This ensures that all developments where construction works are required are appropriate to, and environmentally compatible with the specific location proposed for the project. This mechanism can ensure that no adverse environmental consequences result from the project proceeding. Also, as the projects are community based there is a strong vested interest exercised at local level to ensure that unacceptable impacts do not arise.

From an environmental/social perspective LEADER has an important role to play in supporting viable rural communities. This can be regarded as the most significant consequence of the measure.

Consideration of alternatives with a view to preventing adverse effects

As the likely consequences of the measure are all considered to be positive the issue of alternatives does not arise.

Mitigation

Many of the developments funded by LEADER will require planning consent from the relevant Planning Authority (the local authority) before being permitted to proceed. These consents have associated Development Consent “Conditions” aimed at avoiding or mitigating any of adverse environmental consequences predicted to potentially arise.

Performance Indicators

The key indicators for the programme will be:

- the nature of the projects;
- the number of projects funded.

Monitoring

As was the case in the current period all financial data will be collected using an electronic data collection and management system. This system will build on and improve the system used in the current period to develop a more comprehensive system for the collection and reporting both financial and performance related data.

In addition to financial and performance data many of the developments funded by LEADER will have associated Development Consent Conditions as issued by the relevant local authority (the Planning Authority). Any development consent compliance issues that might arise with any given project can be monitored and controlled by means of these consents.

5. TRANSBOUNDARY IMPACTS

SEA is required to consider the potential for trans-boundary impacts resulting from any state supported programme. In the case of the RDP the principal vectors for such potential impacts are water and air.

The Republic of Ireland shares various river basins and estuaries with Northern Ireland. With due care in the implementation of the RDP, as is the intention, the issue of water pollution arising at a scale that would adversely impact on waters outside of the Republic is extremely unlikely. This is particularly so given that there are no measures proposed in the RDP that have been identified as potentially increasing water pollution. Also, trans-boundary co-operation, most notably in respect of River Basin Management Plans, can act as a further protection measure.

The second vector, that of air, essentially relates to “climate”, as no local air quality issues in the general sense, have been found to be associated with the RDP.

Emissions of trans-boundary air pollutants are controlled by the 1999 UNECE Gothenburg Protocol under the Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution (CLRT AP) and by the EU National Emissions Ceiling (NEC) Directive (EP and CEU, 2001a). The NEC directive prescribes national emissions ceilings for each EU country for four key trans-boundary pollutants: sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and ammonia (NH₃). These requirements have resulted in substantial progress on emissions reduction in recent years.

Clearly all emissions of Greenhouse Gases have some trans-boundary impact because their effects on climate change are global rather than local. However each jurisdiction has its own legally binding limits and targets for GHG emissions so any emissions resulting from the RDP have no bearing on limits or targets of neighbouring jurisdictions. In any event, the environmental analysis indicates no increased emission for GHGs or negative impacts on climate change arising from the RDP.

Northern Ireland, through the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), is implementing its own RDP under the EU Rural Development Regulations. For the same reasons DARD’s RDP is subject to SEA and that analysis has not identified any trans-boundary issues. Both parties (NI and the RoI) have exchanged information in regard to their respective SEAs and will continue to cooperate into the future.

6. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As is referenced in the environmental assessment of the various RDP measures there are a number of national plans and programmes that can potentially have linkages with the RDP. In many respects the RDP now under consideration has been drafted with regard to these Plans and Programmes, such as in the case of the “National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016” in the drafting of the GLAS measure. These Plans, Programmes and Strategies and the Environmental Protection Objectives they contain, are addressed in the following sections.

6.2 RELEVANT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Food Harvest 2020

“Food Harvest 2020” – This is an ambitious industry sponsored strategy that has implications for groundwater, surface water, biodiversity and climate. The report of an independent environmental analysis of Food Harvest 2020 was published in January 2014. This report was prepared for the Department by consultants Philip Farrelly & Co.

National Biodiversity Plan 2011–2016

The National Biodiversity Plan 2011–2016 (DAHG, 2011) is the main vehicle by which Ireland seeks to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The plan lists 102 actions that cover the conservation of biodiversity in the wider countryside and in the marine environment, both within and outside protected areas. Information on habitats loss and biodiversity will be supported by data gathered from National Biodiversity Data Centre for assessing current status and trends. (The organisation is the national centre for the collection, collation, management, analysis and dissemination of data on Ireland's biological diversity).

National Action Plan for the Sustainable use of Pesticides

The use of pesticides has important implications for human health and biodiversity. The EU Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive introduces the concept of ‘Integrated Pest Management’. This emphasises the growth of a healthy crop with the least possible disruption to agro-ecosystems and encourages natural pest control mechanisms. It means careful consideration of all available plant protection methods and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of populations of harmful organisms and keep the use of plant protection products and other forms of intervention to levels that are economically and ecologically justified and reduce or minimise risks to human health and the environment. Pesticide residue levels in food are regulated through MRL (Maximum Residue Level) legislation (Regulation EC No 396/2005).

The National Action Plan defines a national strategy to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides and set down objectives, quantifiable measures and timeframes to reduce the risks associated with the use of pesticides. It includes the utilisation of buffer zones, safeguard zones, and restrictions on use in sensitive and designated areas.

County Development Plans and Local Area Plans

Local authorities are required to prepare County Development Plans and Local Area Plans for spatial land use. These statutory based plans are subject to public consultation. The plans play an important role in preparing a considered approach to sustainable development and can respond to local population trends and infrastructural requirements both in the near short term (e.g. 5 years) and long term.

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020 is an important strategy for spatial planning and development for both now and the future. (In many respects the strategy is considered to have failed in terms of achieving its objectives, its intended revision remains an important consideration in land use planning).

Sustainable Development - Our Sustainable Future, a Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland

This framework sets out the green economy and sustainable development agendas as key elements of Ireland's economic recovery strategy. The Framework establishes the range of environmental, economic and social measures required to achieve that recovery. These measures include areas such as the sustainability of economic resilience, natural resources, agriculture, climate change, transport, public health, education, innovation and research, education, and skills and training.

Flood Risk Reduction

It is recognised that land use planning is a major consideration in achieving the objective of reducing flooding risks. Such risks are associated with increasing hard surface areas as a consequence of urbanisation and also from agricultural land use relating to land drainage programmes and the nature and extent of land use for agriculture and forestry, particularly in upland areas. The RDP therefore is of relevance in this context.

Recent flooding events, possibly linked to global climate change issues, are seen to be of increasing concern nationally. Various guidelines and objectives have been established in respect of reducing the risk of flooding. These include the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities", 2009 prepared by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Office of Public Works (OPW). Such plans and guidelines are co-ordinated with the preparation of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP's) under the EU Water Framework Directive and future work required to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans under the EU Floods Directive by the OPW.

River Basin Management Plans (RBMP)

Seven River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) have been prepared for Ireland. These RBMPs include measures for:

- controlling inputs of phosphorus and nitrogen
- controlling inputs of organic pollutants such as silage and sewage
- controlling pathogens in water
- elimination of dangerous substances from water bodies
- maintaining sufficient water volumes in surface waters
- controlling hydromorphological conditions (physical characteristics) in rivers

“A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland” (Strategic Issues for Consultation) 2011.

This document, prepared by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, sets out Ireland’s aims and objectives with regard to landscape and positions it in the context of existing strategies, policies and objectives as well as the framework of the European Landscape Convention.

National Renewable Energy Action Plan

Article 4 of Directive 2009/28/EC on renewable energy requires each Member State to adopt a national renewable energy action plan (NREAP) to be submitted to the European Commission. The plan is to set out the Member State’s national targets for the share of energy from renewable sources consumed in transport, electricity and heating and cooling in 2020, demonstrating how the Member State will meet their overall national target established under the Directive. Ireland submitted its National Renewable Energy Action Plan, prepared by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, to the European Commission in July 2010. The plan includes objectives relating to increasing biomass availability for energy generation from various sources including agriculture and forestry. There are also a number of regional energy plans (the Bio-Energy Strategy and Action Plans for the Mid West Region, 2009 and the South East Region Bio-Energy Implementation Plan 2008-2013)

In 2013 the Government published a Strategy for Renewable Energy ‘2012 - 2020’. As part of this strategy Ireland has a binding target to produce 16% of its consumed energy from renewables by 2020. This 16% straddles the electricity, heating and transport sectors.

Tillage Sector Development Plan - A Plan for the Development of the Irish Tillage Crop Sector

This plan compiled by the Teagasc Tillage Crop Stakeholder Consultative Group sets out a plan for the development of tillage in Ireland. It includes a SWOT analysis of the environmental issues presented by the development of tillage.

Origin Green

This is a unique sustainability development programme by Bord Bia (The Irish Food Board) to internationally demonstrate the commitment of Irish food and drink producers to operating sustainably - in terms of greenhouse gas emission, energy conservation, water management, waste, biodiversity, community initiatives and health and nutrition. It is a voluntary, membership, based programme.

6.3 RELEVANT DIRECTIVES AND INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

There are a number of environmental Directives and international Agreements that can potentially have linkages with the RDP. Where it is required to establish these in Irish there are also corresponding implementing regulations. The relevance and importance of these is that many set the legal framework of environmental rules and requirements under Irish within which rural development takes place. In many respects these statutory rules and requirements serve as an important, and sometimes the primary, “Control Measure” for the proposed RDP 2014-2020. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Habitats Directive-

The Habitats Directive is implemented in Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011),

Nitrates Directive

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) has been introduced in Ireland through a series of Regulations, the most recent of which was the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations S.I. No.31, 2014. The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme for the protection of waters against pollution caused by agricultural sources. It requires each member state to prepare a Nitrates Action Programme and includes a requirement to produce regular progress reports on that programme. As issues of surface and groundwater quality relate to the storage and disposal of animal wastes these Regulations are an important consideration in any agricultural development plan.

EU Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive is an important piece of EU environmental legislation which aims at improving our water environment. It requires governments to take a new holistic approach to managing their waters. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. Member States must aim to achieve good status in all waters by 2015 and must ensure that status does not deteriorate in any waters. This website is an information resource for interested parties and holds extensive documentation relating to WFD-related studies and River Basin Management Plans. Also of note is the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations S.I. No.31, 2014.

EU Floods Directive

European Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks aims to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. The Directive applies to inland waters as well as all coastal waters across the EU. The Directive requires Member States to carry out a preliminary assessment by 2011 in order to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding. Associated Guidelines are:- "Planning System and Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities", 2009

Waste Framework Directive (WFD 75/442/EC)- The primary objective of the WFD is to ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health and without using processes or methods which could harm the environment, and in particular: without risk to water, air, soil, and plants and animals; without causing a nuisance through noise or odours; without adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest: the prevention and reduction of waste; the recovery of waste by means of recycling, its re-use, reclamation etc; and the use of waste as a source of energy.

Trans-boundary Air Pollutants

Emissions of trans-boundary pollutants are controlled by the 1999 UNECE Gothenburg Protocol under the Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution (CLRT AP) and by the EU National Emissions Ceiling (NEC) Directive (EP and CEU, 2001a). The NEC directive prescribes national emissions ceilings for each EU country for four key trans-boundary pollutants: sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and ammonia (NH₃).

The Environmental Protection Agency (Industrial Emissions) (Licensing) Regulations S.I. No. 137 of 2013

These Regulations are part of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control licensing legislation implementing the EU Directive on the licensing of emissions. Under IPPC certain categories of activities require a licence from the EPA prior to commencing the activity. Activities include certain

categories of intensive animal rearing facilities above specified thresholds. Licenses contain a wide and comprehensive range of enforceable environmental conditions.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

This codified version of the Directive on EIA sets the nature and thresholds for a wide range of developments that must be assessed under a formal, public participative, permitting process prior to being permitted to proceed. It involves a systematic evaluate of the likely significant environmental impacts and the mitigation/control of those impacts. The Directive is implemented in Ireland through a range of regulations, including cross-cutting regulations on planning and development.

European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Agriculture) Regulations S.I. 456, 2011).

Under these Regulations farmland developments relating to “restructuring of rural holdings”, “commencing to use uncultivated land or semi-natural land for intensive agriculture” an “land drainage works on land used for agriculture” may, depending on their scale and location, be subject to EIA.

Pesticides Directive 2009/128/EC

Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides, more commonly referred to as “the Sustainable Use Directive”, was transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument No. 155 of 2012, European Communities (Sustainable Use of Pesticides) Regulations 2012. Among the requirements of the Directive, is the requirement to adopt a National Action Plan (NAP) for the sustainable use of pesticides.

Planning and Development

The principal regulations underpinning the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2012 are the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. They also consolidate all previous Regulations made under the 2000 Act and replace the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 1994-2000.

6.4 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Teagasc and others have produced comprehensive Best Practice Guidelines for advising on a very wide range of agricultural activities. These set out the environmental implications of various agricultural activities and establish specific best practice measures to mitigate any associated adverse environmental implications. As such they form part of an important operational support and can play a necessary part in the Knowledge Transfer Measures proposed under the RDP. Others, such as “Origin Green” through its requirement for participants to demonstrate environmentally sustainable production also serve as an indirect environmental control measure. Some relevant examples that are of direct relevance to the RDP are presented below.

“Miscanthus Best Practice Guideline”

This is a comprehensive guide prepared by Teagasc on managing the environmental issues that may be associated with growing this energy crop.

“Short Rotation Coppice Willow Best Practice Guidelines”

This is a comprehensive guide prepared by Teagasc on managing the environmental issues, problems and benefits, that may be associated with growing this energy crop.

Food Labelling

Three European Union schemes of geographical indications and traditional specialities, known as protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI), and traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG), promote and protect names of quality agricultural products and foodstuffs. They are based on the legal framework provided by the EU Regulation No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuff. These Regulations identify a number of goals for the food protection regimes, including improvement of food quality and the retention of populations in rural areas.

6.5 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE RDP

It is evident that many of the RDP measures are aimed at improving the efficiency of agriculture through a combination of various supports, most notably investment supports and through raising the level of knowledge and skills across that sector. As in the case of all activities, whether they be agricultural or otherwise, increases in output potentially increases the environmental footprint of those activities. Avoidance or reduction of an activity’s environmental footprint can be achieved by essentially three means/mechanisms, applied either individually or in combination. These means are: placing limits on production, producing in a smarter way, or offsetting environmental losses in one aspect with environmental gains in another.

Placing limits on production, such as the outgoing milk quota system, is not a goal of the RDP nor is it within its remit. Caps on production therefore are not an option for mitigating environmental impacts in this instance.

The second option, smarter production, is a core objective of the RDP and much of the proposed financial allocation is aimed at achieving this. Smarter production reduces the unit losses of materials to the environment, whether that is milk, slurry, chemicals or other materials. This smart production is further enabled by the proposed supports for on-farm capital investments whereby appropriately designed farm structures and equipment can be constructed and installed. The effectiveness of this approach is strongly influenced by current practices within any given jurisdiction, including Ireland. This means that where poor farming and environmental management and skills are applied then providing the means and motivation for upgrading those skills will have a disproportionately positive effect. As a general view Irish agriculture can be regarded as relatively advanced and sophisticated, although not yet to a level such that important improvements cannot be achieved. The RDP targeted knowledge based measures therefore can reasonably be expected to yield positive environmental benefits overall.

The concept of offsetting indirect negative environmental impacts that prove to be unavoidable is well established in the EU and elsewhere. Examples include the protection and enhancement of natural habitats to offset impacts in other areas. The RDP has a number of Agri-Environment measures of some scale and these are integrated into the RDP at all levels. Consequently such measures must be considered as a central aspect of the programme and as one that has the potential

to yield substantial environmental benefits, both in their own right and as a means of offsetting any environmental losses resulting from the maintenance and enhancement of rural development.

A clear objective of the draft RDP is the maintenance and enhancement of rural populations. Those populations will have impacts in terms of housing needs, water supply, sewage disposal and transport infrastructure, all of which of themselves generate downstream environmental impacts. As such they are as a consequence of the RDP support. These population derived impacts are all subject to other downstream planning controls through the five yearly creation of County Development Plans and Local Area Plans etc. , and all of which are subject to SEA in their own right. Additionally as noted earlier in the ER any construction arising either directly or indirectly as a consequence of the RDP may be subject to development consent at local level. This can extend to a requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Directive and Regulations should those developments be regarded as having the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Many of the measures under the RDP are directly linked to a requirement for Best Environmental Practice to be adopted. Examples include the national guidelines for bio-energy crops, which include comprehensive guidelines on environmental protection.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

As is the nature of Strategic Environmental Assessment it must adopt a broad overarching approach in assessing the likely impacts of a plan or programme. Similarly when considering how best a programme such as the RDP may be implemented and monitored it is important that an overly prescriptive approach be avoided. This is dictated by several factors, including: the diversity of measures proposed and the broad range of environments and individual circumstances in which any given measure is to be implemented. Given the current available level of definition of each of these factors it has been recommended below that a flexible approach, one that can be adapted to respond to the individual circumstances as they arise, would be the most appropriate and effective.

The implementation of the programme will be the responsibility of DAFM, including to oversee all aspects of delivery including ensuring that the environmental conditions attached to the individual supports are adhered to and that unanticipated adverse impacts do not occur. If any such adverse situations are found to arise the programme should be sufficiently flexible to allow any such deficiency to be corrected.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The Rural Development Regulation published by the European Commission was formally adopted on the 17th December 2013. Under that regulation it is a clear prerequisite of funding support that the RDP of each Member State take due account of environmental protection and sustainable development.. To that end it is apparent from an examination of each measure of Ireland's draft RDP that these requirements have been addressed in a fully integrated and comprehensive manner. This was achieved at the design stage of the programme, a process which included extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders from the outset.

Ireland has now a mature environmental regulatory system in place, much of it arising as a consequence of a range of mandatory environmental protection Directives issued by the EU over the past decades. While in earlier years, and across all Member States, environmental problems arose, including from agriculture, today these issues have largely been addressed through a comprehensive range of legislative measures, National Action Plans and Guidelines. The RDP is to be implemented within this established Environmental Control regime.

Almost forty percent of the proposed funding under the draft RDP is to be allocated to the "Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme" (GLAS). It is evident that appropriately administered and monitored this measure has the capacity to deliver important benefits for environmental protection across a wide range of environmental protection objectives including; conservation of habitats, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, protection of water quality and climate change.

The next largest proportion of the draft RDP funding is to be allocated to "Areas of Natural Constraint" (ANCs). Approximately thirty-five percent of the total budget is to be allocated to this measure. It is evident from an environmental and population perspective that the principal result of the financial support the ANC provides is that it helps prevent widespread abandonment of farmland in these rural communities. As the measure is closely linked to qualifying criteria such as having to farm in an environmentally responsible manner it is concluded that the ANC measure can have an outcome that is both socially and environmentally positive. Properly administered it has little capacity to have any negative environmental consequences.

While overall financial support for Knowledge Transfer is modest this comparatively low cost support is potentially capable of delivering a disproportionate level of positive environmental benefits. This, in particular, is because it is a central enabling mechanism for the effective delivery and utilisation of the other measures of the RDP. It is only through the development of the knowledge and skills, such as those relating to best environmental practice and sustainable farming, that the environmental benefits of those various measures can be maximised. In recognition of this it is a requirement for applicants for support under many of the measures to participate in associated knowledge and up-skilling programmes.

Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as implemented via the RDP, has as a primary focus the aim of increasing the quality of food output, and in turn to support the maintenance and development of rural communities. As is evident in the case of the Beef Data and Genomics Programme measure, the RDP has the objective of increased efficiency and quality of beef production rather than increased cattle numbers and outputs. This emphasis on quality rather than "headage" represents a positive shift in agricultural policies of the past towards more environmentally sustainable production for the future.

The general level of support and the range of measures proposed in the draft RDP have the capacity to improve the environmental performance of Irish agriculture and, through the GLAS measure in particular, to pro-actively support conservation. In the absence of the programme proceeding the opportunity to achieve these outcomes would be largely missed.

It is concluded that, when viewed in its totality, the RDP has little potential to result in any adverse environmental consequences of note. To the contrary, the RDP has the potential to deliver an overall positive contribution to Ireland's environment and to the communities that environment supports.

ANNEX 1. SEA REGULATIONS (SCHEDULE 2 OF S.I. 435, 2004)

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT AND SCOPE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

(a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes;

The objectives of the RDP are detailed in the Environmental Report (ER) under each measure of the Programme. Where linkages exist between the RDP and other relevant Plans and Programmes such linkages are identified in the case of each measure of the RDP.

(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,

This aspect is addressed as it arises over the course of the evaluation presented in the ER, such as land abandonment that would potentially be a concern in the absence of the RDP ANC measure.

(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;

Reference is made to the State of the Environment Report 2012 (EPA –Ireland) and the key aspects relevant to the RDP are identified and summarised.

(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive;

This issue is addressed by way of the environmental analysis within the ER, most notably in the case of the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS). The proposed GLAS measure has been drafted in the light of the experience of problems and limitations of past measures in respect of the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;

Various international agreements, obligations and EU Directives establish environmental protection objectives. Examples include those contained in the Convention on Long-Range Trans-boundary Air Pollution (CLRT AP), the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive. These are addressed where relevant to the proposed measures of the RDP.

(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;

Each of the above elements was systematically examined for each measure and the findings presented in the ER.

(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;

The mitigation measures proposed under each of the RDP measures are provided.

(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;

The issue of alternatives is addressed under each measure. The methodology adopted for the ER is also described. There were no technical difficulties encountered in preparing the ER.

(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;

The principal actions for monitoring the implementation of the Programme measures are constructed in a manner that also provides the central means of monitoring the environmental effects. These are detailed for each measure within the ER.

(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

A non-technical summary is provided.

List of Audits of RDP schemes since 2007

Audit	Audit Findings	Mitigating Actions proposed in the 2014-2020 Programme
<u>2008</u>		
European Commission – RDP 2007- 2013 (Reps and LFA) (2008)	The audit report raised issues in relation to area verification and crosschecking, farmer record keeping, and on-the-spot checks.	<p>For GLAS in the 2014 - 2020 period paper based applications have been replaced with a bespoke online application system. The system predetermines the environmental assets on each farm at LPIS parcel level and uses farm maps generated directly from the IACS database.</p> <p>Actions chosen must be clearly defined and delineated on the electronic map as required. The unit of delivery will be generated by the actual delivery mapped.</p> <p>GLAS participants must complete GLAS records sheet at an action and parcel level clearly setting out what activities were carried out and when with regard to the action(s)</p> <p>Key on the spot checks have been built into the GLAS design</p>
Internal audit unit - Accreditation Review (REPS/Crop Production)	This audit report identified some minor findings related to checklists and procedures manuals.	Comprehensive procedures manuals and checklists are in place for the new programming period and will be kept under review.

Internal Audit Unit (IAU) - Inspection Procedures for the SPS and Disadvantaged Area Scheme	The findings related to the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme included insufficient procedures manual and incorrect calculations. Further findings referred to insufficient audit trail and quality controls.	Under the ANC scheme in the new RDP, procedures manuals will be in place for all aspects of the scheme. Staff will be trained in relation to the need for correct calculations and completion of audit trails. A full quality control process will be put in place and a full definition of penalties and payments will be put on the system.
2009		
Internal Audit Unit - Farm improvement programme - 2008 & 2009	The audit found deficiencies regarding the procedures manual, the file tracking system, and review and monitoring of user access. Furthermore, there were findings in relation to application file processing and checking.	Comprehensive procedures manuals and checklists are in place for the new programming period and will be kept under review. New procedures are in place for application checking and monitoring, and appropriate staff training will be undertaken before schemes commence.
ECA - Performance audit of agri-environmental measures - Measure 214 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (2009)	Audit findings related to insufficient checking and verification procedures, and unreliable statistics.	The new online GLAS system will facilitate the required level of checking and verification, while the centralised administration and computerised systems for generating reporting data will address the statistics related issues.
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) – Application Controls Audit of the REPS Scheme – IT Audit (2009)	This audit found some low risk findings relating to audit trails around system users, log-on and data change.	The GLAS online system will address these issues as it has built in user audit trails of log on details and data verification.
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) - REPS	The audit found issues ranked as medium and low risk, and they related to administrative cross-checks, manual and supervisory checking.	The online system allows for cross checks with other data bases to be carried out electronically, and provision has been made for all the relevant cross checks.

LEADER audit - Deloitte & Touche	The audit report identified some issues relating to the procedures manual, claims processed at LAG level and additional template checklists. The report also contained suggestions on stakeholder engagement by LAG's.	Template checklists will be provided as part of the procedures manual. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs in the new programming period. A more integrated approach to local development and to fully engage with all relevant stakeholders at local level will be introduced.
<u>2010</u>		
Commission Audit of Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 - Enquiry No RD2/2010/02 (2010)	The audit was broad based across RDP schemes and raised issues regarding selection criteria, administrative checks, on the spot checks and the sanction system for the AEOS scheme.	Schemes in the new RDP will have procedures in place to deal with the issues raised in the audit report. Selection criteria will be applied with a transparent marking system and cut off points. Selection criteria have been a central focus in the RDP design phase and a consistent approach has been facilitated via the RDP Implementation Steering Group.
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) Accreditation review - (Disadvantaged Area Scheme/SPS)	This Audit found 3 minor clerical errors.	Under the new RDP all pay runs to be fully checked and quality control applied at high standard. Staff will be further advised of the requirement for a high level of controls in relation to payments and penalties.
LEADER audit – Mazars Systems Audit of the EU funded Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013	The report outlined recommendations on decision making at LAG level. The report identified issues with exchanges of details with County Enterprise Boards. Further recommendations were made on procedures manuals and financial controls at LAG level.	In the 2014-2020 period a more integrated approach to local development is being implemented to ensure full engagement with all relevant stakeholders at a local level. The LAG's will be required to adhere to procedures for sound financial management for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs and where required these assessments will be conducted by the delegated Paying Agency.
LEADER audit –	Recommendations were made on contracts of employment , employee costs and contract extensions at CEO level. Advice was given on the submission of detailed final reports on completion of the project and	The simplified cost option will be utilised under the 2014-2020 Programme. The rationale behind apportionment of costs will form part of the

Deloitte & Touche	the apportionment of costs.	procedures manual template for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs in the 2014-2020 programming period.
<u>2011</u>		
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) – AEOS	This audit report had findings related to deficiencies in inspections and penalty application, procedures manuals and administrative errors.	The timeliness of on the spot inspections will be factored into the scheduling of inspections under GLAS and procedures will be developed for systematic analysis of inspection results. Comprehensive procedures manuals and checklists are in place for the new programming period and will be kept under review.
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) – TAMS	The audit found issues in relation to procedures manuals, conflict of interest procedures, application processing and approval.	The issues identified will be addressed in the new scheme procedures manuals and in staff training to be undertaken before the new schemes commence.
LEADER audit – Deloitte & Touche	The report contained recommendations on contracts of employment at LAG level and financial reporting procedures. Operating Procedures and the Public Procurement Guidelines were also addressed in the report. Further recommendations were made on project checklists. The reports also advised on reporting of expenditure and controls at LAG level.	The simplified cost option will be utilised under the 2014-2020 Programme. Additional financial reporting procedures will form part of the procedures manual template for the 2014-2020 Programme. Enhanced capacity building sessions in particular for public procurement compliance, will be run for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs.
<u>2012</u>		
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) – Organic Farming Scheme	The audit found issues in relation to procedures manuals, the risk management register and conflict of interest procedure issues,	The issues identified will be addressed in the new scheme procedures manuals, which are reviewed and updated annually and in staff training to be undertaken before the new schemes commence.
LEADER audit – Deloitte & Touche & ISO	The report contained recommendations on financial controls and procurement at LAG level. Further recommendations were made on employee contracts, pay scales and T&S at LAG level. Advice was given	Financial procedure at LAG level will form part of the procedures manual template for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs.

Audit	on apportionment policies and to ensure that the RDP Programme is not subsidising other Programmes.	Enhanced capacity building sessions in particular for public procurement compliance, will be run for the 2014-2020 Programme. In relation to financial procedures a simplified cost option is to be utilised under the 2014-2020 Programme
<u>2013</u>		
Internal Audit Unit (IAU) – Disadvantaged Area Scheme (2013)	The audit found some deficiencies with the procedures manual, the risk management system, conflict of interest procedures, and some verification checks.	The issues identified will be addressed in the new scheme procedures manuals and in staff training to be undertaken before the new schemes commence.
LEADER audit – Deloitte & Touche	The report outlined recommendations on Operating Rules and apportionment policies. Further recommendations were made on financial controls and systems and personnel in monitoring and evaluating RDP applications for grant aid. Apportionment policy and operating rules were also addressed along with additional procurement procedures. The report also made recommendations on LAG interaction with local development agencies regarding project applications and subsequent audit trails.	Recommendations on operating rules and apportionment policy will form part of the procedures manual template for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs. A simplified cost option is to be utilised under the 2014-2020 Programme. Under local government reform a more integrated approach to interaction with local development agencies will be implemented. Enhanced capacity building sessions in particular for public procurement compliance, will be run for the 2014-2020 Programme.
LEADER audit – Internal Audit Review Audit of the Rural Development Programme	The report made recommendations on apportionment of costs and contract timeframes. Other minor administrative issues were also addressed.	The recommendations will be taken into account in the procedures manual template for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs. A simplified cost option is to be utilised under the 2014-2020 Programme.
<u>2014</u>		
LEADER audit – Commission Audit/European Court of Auditors	The report identified issues with checking Public Procurement procedures and administrative checks. Application of reductions for investment policies was also addressed.	Enhanced capacity building sessions in particular for public procurement compliance, will be run for the 2014-2020 Programme. Administrative Checks under Article 28 will not be delegated to LAGs.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RELEASED GLAS SPECIFICATION:

23rd February 2015

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Introduction

This GLAS Specification GLAS must be used in the preparation of all GLAS Plans for Tranche 1. This specification overrides all previous draft specifications and any answers to queries by the Department either verbal or written given to date regarding the GLAS Scheme.

Note: It is expected that successful participants will receive a commencement date for GLAS 1 of 1st September 2015 and all dates for completion of actions as set out on page 7 are predicated on this date.

- All actions (excluding bat, bird and bee boxes) must be selected on LPIS parcels with a utilisable agricultural area (UAA). The only exception is for Commonage which will be paid on the GLAS Commonage Area.
- All area based actions are paid on the net eligible area.
- Participants must ensure they have control of the lands for the duration of the GLAS contract whether owned, leased or rented.
- Advisors / farmers must ensure that the area, feature and/or linear units entered for payment in GLAS are suitable for the action to be carried out.
- Arable parcel actions must be delivered on parcels declared as 'arable' on the current SPS/BPS application.
- If you intend to split a LPIS parcel by digitisation, unless there is a physical stockproof boundary on the ground, a fence must be put in place by the commencement date of the GLAS contract.
- Works on capital investment items must not commence until notification of commencement of the GLAS contract has been issued.
- Land drainage or reclamation work is not allowed on parcels selected for area based actions. However if existing drains become blocked they may be repaired with as minimum disturbance as possible to the LPIS parcel.
- Catch Crops sown for the purpose of fulfilling greening equivalence criteria under Pillar I of CAP are eligible for a reduced GLAS payment.
- The burning of stubble is not permitted on LPIS parcels chosen for tillage based actions.
- For a fence to be considered stock proof and fit for purpose, it must consist of permanent stakes and wire appropriate for the livestock type.
- Receipts for work carried out must be retained for the duration of the contract and for three months after the end of the contract.
- Records must be maintained annually for the duration of the contract and for three months after the end of the GLAS contract.
- Where LPIS parcels of Low Input Permanent Pasture and Traditional Hay Meadow are situated within designated Natura 2000 site, farmers may choose to forgo the Natura payment and receive the LIPP or THM payment under GLAS once the parcel(s) comply with the Low Input Permanent Pasture and/or Traditional Hay Meadow specification.

- Entrants in the Organic Farming Scheme should refer to appendix 2 for eligible GLAS actions.
- Phosphorus is permitted to be applied on area based actions in line with the requirements of SI 31/2014
- Where more than 1 margin type is taken on the same LPIS parcel, they cannot overlap on each other.
- Other than the protection of monuments action, no other GLAS actions can be delivered on the site of a National Monument.
- GLAS participants should comply with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use Code (CRRU) in their daily farming activities - see Appendix 7.
- Where farmers have designated lands, they must ensure they comply with the Activities Requiring Consent – see appendix 13.
- Lakes are not eligible watercourses for the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines action and for the Riparian Margin action.
- Where the application of fertiliser restrictions under certain compulsory Tier 1 Farmland Bird Actions threatens farm viability, or could lead to hardship due to inability to produce sufficient fodder for livestock, applicants may remove up to 20% of the GLAS-identified area from payment. Entire parcels can be removed, or existing parcels may be split to reserve areas for fodder production or other farm use. These areas will NOT receive payment for the relevant Bird action and no other GLAS action may be selected on them. The species concerned are Twite A, Chough, Corncrake, Hen Harrier and Breeding Waders.

Abbreviations:

ARC: Activity Requiring Consent

GA: General Action

GAEC: Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

CMP: Commonage Management Plan

HSWS: High Status Water Sites

LIPP: Low Input Permanent Pasture

LPIS: Land Parcel Identification System

NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Service

PA: Priority Action

PP: Part Parcel i.e. only part of the parcel is committed to the GLAS action

SMP: Sustainable Management Plan

SPS: Single Payment Scheme

THM: Traditional Hay Meadow

UAA: Utilisable Agricultural Area

VSWS: Vulnerable Status Water Sites

WP: Whole Parcel i.e. the whole parcel is committed to the GLAS action

Actions: Minimum/ Maximum Units, Completion deadlines and Payment Rate

Action		Minimum	Maximum Payable Units in GLAS	Completion deadline	Payment Rate
Arable grass margin	a) 3 metre width		7,000m	All tillage crops harvested in 2016	€0.35/m/yr
	b) 4 metre width		5,000m		€0.50/m/yr
	c) 6 metre width		3,500m		€0.70/m/yr
Bat Box		3 boxes	15 boxes	31 st March 2016	€13/box/yr
Bird Box		1 box	15 boxes	31 st March 2016	€6/box/yr
Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes)		1 box	5 boxes	31 st March 2016	€6/box/yr
Conservation of Solitary Bees (Sand)		1 habitat	2 habitats	31 st March 2016	€45/habitat/yr
1. Breeding Waders			*		€366/ha/yr
2. Chough			*		€365/ha/yr
3. Corncrake			*		€364/ha/yr
4. Geese and Swans			*		€205/ha/yr
5. Grey Partridge		200m	*	31 st May 2016	€2.10/m/yr
6. Hen Harrier			*		€370/ha/yr
7. Twite A			*		€375/ha/yr
Twite B		50m	*	31 st May 2016	€1.50/m/yr
Twite C		0.25ha	3ha	31 st May 2016	€900/ha/yr
Catch Crops		10 ha (Priority Area) / 4 ha (General Action)	32 ha	15 th September following approval.	€155/ha/yr
Commonage Management Plan			*		€120/ha/yr
Coppicing of Hedgerows		10m	1,000m	28 th February 2017	€2.20/m/yr
Environmental Management of Fallow Land		0.25ha	3 ha	31 st May 2016	€750/ha/yr
Farmland Habitat (Private Natura)			*		€79/ha/yr
Laying of Hedgerows		10m	1,000m	28 th February 2017	€3.70/m/yr
Low Emission Slurry Spreading			*		€1.20/m ³ /yr
Low Input Permanent Pasture / Traditional Hay Meadow			10 ha		€314/ha/yr and €315/ha/yr
Minimum Tillage		10 ha (Priority Area) / 4 ha (General Action)	*	1 st crop establishment following approval	€40/ha/yr
Planting a Grove of Native Trees		0.05ha / 250 plants	0.09 ha / 450 plants	31 st March 2016	€0.90/plant/yr
Planting New Hedgerow		10m ¹	200m	31 st March 2016	€5/m/y
Protection and Maintenance of Monuments	a) Tillage	1	20	31 st May 2016	€146/unit/yr
	b) Grassland	1		28 th February 2017	€120/unit/yr
Protection of Water Courses from Bovines			*	31 st December 2015	€1.50/m/yr
Rare Breeds		0.15 LU	10 LU		€200/unit/yr
Riparian Margin	a) 3 metre width		*	31 st March 2016	€0.90/m/yr
	b) 6 metre width		*	31 st March 2016	€1.20/m/yr
	c) 10 metre width		*	31 st March 2016	€1.60/m/yr
	d) 30 metre width		*	31 st March 2016	€3.60/m/yr
Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance		10m	4,000m		€0.70/m/yr
Traditional Orchards		0.05ha / 10 trees	0.05ha / 10 trees	31 st March 2016	€23.50/unit/yr
Wild Bird Cover		0.25ha (General Action) / 1.0ha (Priority Action)	3 ha	31 st May 2016	€900/ha/yr

* = Overall maximum payment is €5,000 or €7,000 per GLAS participant per year

¹Must be in a single continuous length yr = year, m = metre, ha = hectare and m³= cubic metre

Arable Grass Margins

Objective:

To provide a habitat for flora and fauna, increase biodiversity and help protect water quality.

Background:

The establishment of an arable grass margin along the full length of an existing field or LPIS parcel boundary will increase the diversity on the farm. Where established along a watercourse it acts as a buffer zone to intercept sediment and nutrients.

Notes: The parcels selected for this action must remain declared as **arable** for the duration of the GLAS contract and the Arable Grass Margin must also remain in the same location for the duration of the GLAS Contract.

Where the margin is established along a watercourse, an additional 2 metre unsown (with an arable crop) and unfertilised margin must be in place between the watercourse and the arable grass margin.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (boxes/sand), Grey Partridge, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Establish a 3, 4 or 6 metre grass margin along the full length of a LPIS parcel or field boundary. The Arable Grass Margin must be established on all selected tillage parcels on which a tillage crop will be harvested off in 2016.
2.	The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. The margin(s) must remain in the same location for the duration of the contract. Participants can choose different Arable Grass Margin widths within the same LPIS parcels, but only on different/separate field/LPIS boundaries.
3.	Sow a grass seed mix containing at least 60% Cocksfoot or Timothy or a combination of

	these. Grass seed labels and receipts should be kept for the duration of the GLAS contract.
4.	Soil cultivation cannot be carried out within the margin once established.
5.	The margin must be mulched, mown or grazed at least once per year, but not between the 1st March and the 15 th August. Off takes can be removed.
6.	Fertiliser or lime cannot be applied to the margin.
7.	Pesticides cannot be applied to the margin except for the spot treatment of noxious and/or invasive weeds.

Bat Boxes

Objectives:

To improve biodiversity in the farming landscape and replace habitats lost through changes in farming practice. Bats also play an important role in farm pest management as they feed on midges, flies and other potential pest species.

Background:

This action is to help to replace natural roost locations for bats that have been removed through the changes in farming practice. It will help to conserve some of the nine bat species found in Ireland. All Irish bat species are protected by the 1976 Wildlife Act and 2000 amendment and the EU Habitats Directive.

Bat boxes are most likely to be used if located in areas where bats feed. Bats in particular favour hedgerows and treelines as navigation routeways and feeding sites. Areas where bats can be spotted zipping around in the evenings are suitable sites to locate a bat roost box.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese & Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Catch Crop WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Environmental Management of Fallow Land WP, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP, Traditional Orchards and Wild Bird Cover WP.

Requirements:

1.	Install new bat roost boxes with 3 boxes per tree or 3 boxes per post or 3 boxes per building. The 3 boxes in each location must face in different directions. Bat Roost Boxes must be in place by 31 st March 2016.
2.	The maximum number of Bat boxes is 15, in groups of three boxes per tree or per post or per farm building.
3.	The location must be clearly marked on the map and must be maintained in the same

	position for the duration of the contract. Once the box is installed, a marking must be put on the tree or post to identify it for inspection purposes.
4.	Box(es) can be made from wood or woodcrete and must be draught free.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that bat boxes are placed a minimum of 4 metres off the ground and an area of 1m radius around the Roost Box must be clear of obstacles such as no ivy and/or branches. It is also recommended that boxes are not placed in a lit up area of the farmyard or adjacent to lighting. Bat boxes should ideally be place close to hedgerows or areas of scrub where bats will hunt.

Further information:

<http://www.batconservationireland.org>

<http://www.batroostireland.org>

<http://www.highwoodsvolunteers.org.uk>

For diagrams and measurements of a bat box - see **Appendix 8**.

Bird Boxes

Objectives:

To improve biodiversity in the farming landscape and replace habitats lost through changes in farming practice.

Background:

This action is to help to replace natural habitats for birds that have been removed through changes in farming practice. As a result of changes to our countryside, several bird species have come to rely on farm buildings and other structures for nesting habitats.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese & Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Catch Crops WP, Coppicing Hedgerows, Environmental Management of Fallow Land WP, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP, Traditional Orchards and Wild Bird Cover WP.

Requirements:

1.	Install a new Bird Box(es) by the 31 st March 2016.
2.	A minimum of 1 Bird Box and a maximum of 15 Bird Boxes.
3.	Place a maximum of 1 Bird Box per tree or post or on the external wall of a farm building.
4.	The location(s) must be clearly marked on the map and must be maintained in the same position for the duration of the contract. Once the box is installed, a marking must be put on the tree or post to identify it for inspection purposes.
5.	Box(es) can be made from wood or woodcrete and must be draught free.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that old nest material is cleaned out annually to prevent carryover of parasites from one nesting season to the next, ideally in February. Bird Boxes should be placed at least 2.5 metres off the ground.

Entrance of the box must face North or North East. Bird Boxes should be tilted slightly forward to allow moisture to drain out.

Further information:

For Diagrams and measurements of a Bird Box – see **Appendix 9**. Also see

<http://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2008/20080417/nestboxes.pdf> and

<http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Default.aspx?tabid=270> for further details.

Note: Cross compensation between Bird Boxes and Bat Roost Boxes is not allowed i.e. if you apply to deliver 5 Bird Boxes and 5 Bat Roost Boxes, you must deliver 5 of each to be paid for all ten i.e. you cannot deliver 8 of one and 2 of the other. The same applies to the Bee Box action.

Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes)

Objective:

To improve biodiversity in the farming landscape and replace habitats lost through changes in farming practice.

Background:

Of the 101 bee species in Ireland, 80 species are solitary bees. Solitary bees look very different from bumblebees. They are much smaller and occur in a range of different sizes and colours. Irish solitary species nest in various different ways. Leafcutter solitary bees nest in hollowed out twigs or bamboo canes. Solitary bees are useful in the pollination of crops as well as having wider biodiversity benefits.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Catch Crops WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Environmental Management of Fallow Land WP, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP, Traditional Orchards and Wild Bird Cover WP.

Requirements:

1.	Install a new bee box(es) by the 31 st March 2016 – see appendix 10.
2.	A minimum of 1 Bee box and a maximum of 5 Bee boxes.
3.	The location must be clearly marked on the map and must be maintained in the same position for the duration of the contract.
4.	Box(es) must be made from wood and must be draught free.
5.	Place box(es) on a tree/post. Once the box is installed, a marking must be put on the tree/post to identify it for inspection purposes. Only one bee box should be placed on each tree or post.
6.	Box(es) must be protected from livestock.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the bee box should be placed in close proximity of flowering plants that flower annually from May to September. Bee Boxes should be placed a minimum of 40 cm off the ground, in a sunny location, sheltered from wind and protected from the rain.

Further information:

<http://www.foxleas.com/beehouse.htm>

For Diagrams and measurements of a bee box - see **Appendix 10**.

Conservation of Solitary Bees (Sand)

Objective:

To improve biodiversity in the farming landscape and replace habitats lost through changes in farming practice.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Catch Crops WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Environmental Management of Fallow Land WP, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP, Traditional Orchards and Wild Bird Cover WP.

Requirements:

1.	Create a bee habitat by placing 1 tonne of builder's sand in a mound in the corner of a LPIS parcel or field and fence it from livestock by the 31 st March 2016.
2.	A minimum of 1 Bee habitat and a maximum of 2 Bee habitats.
3.	The Bee Habitats cannot be placed side by side and must be individually fenced from livestock.
4.	The location must be clearly marked on the map and must be maintained in the same position for the duration of the contract.
5.	The Habitat(s) must be strimmed annually and throughout the GLAS contract to keep shading vegetation under control.
6.	Pesticides cannot be applied to the habitat.
7.	Receipts for the sand indicating the weight must be retained for the duration of the GLAS contract.

It is recommended that the bee habitat is positioned in a sunny location ideally south facing slopes and exposed to direct sunlight. You should avoid locations within 20 metres of a watercourse and/or on steep slope(s).

Conservation of Farmland Birds

1. Breeding Waders

Objective:

Maintain and increase the breeding success of breeding waders by halting habitat loss and enhancing habitat availability and suitability.

Background:

National and regional numbers of Breeding Waders have suffered severe decline over recent years in particular Lapwing, Dunlin, Redshank, Golden Plover, Snipe and Curlew. This is due to a loss of habitat, especially due to the intensification of agriculture and afforestation of land. Without intervention the population is facing extinction. Breeding waders depend upon extensive farming systems, such as extensive grazing of upland commonages, lowland wet grasslands or machair grassland, to maintain habitats appropriately i.e. vegetation for nests and chick-feeding areas during the breeding season.

Note: Your advisor will advise you as to whether you have these LPIS parcels on your land when he/she is submitting your GLAS application for you online.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Produce a sward cover by extensive grazing of parcels within the GLAS contract to allow for a mosaic of short, medium and tall vegetation cover to develop between 15 th March and 1 st July annually.
2.	There must be a grazing enterprise of owned livestock on the holding.
3.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
4.	No machinery operations can be carried out between the 15th March and 15th July on

	parcels within the GLAS contract.
5.	Fertilisers and other chemicals are not permitted. Where noxious and/or invasive weeds are present, they must be controlled ideally by mechanical means; however spot treatment using pesticides may be required in some circumstances.
6.	Rushes, where present must be controlled annually, but not between 15th March and 15th July. The use of a weed wiper for control of rushes is permissible.
7.	No silage or hay can be cut from parcels within the GLAS contract
8.	No reseeding of these parcels is allowed.

Note: Where the fencing of a watercourse for bovines is a priority action, a derogation may be sought from Johnstown Castle not to fence the watercourse on parcels with breeding waders. The Derogation must be sought and approved by 31st December 2015. Where a derogation is approved, the participant will remain eligible for GLAS, but will receive no payment for the fencing of watercourse action for the lengths concerned within the Derogation.

Where rushes are topped before the 15th March and/or after the 15th July, approximately 30% of the rush cover should be retained.

2. Chough

Objective:

To maintain and enhance habitat areas for Chough and increase numbers of breeding Chough in targeted areas.

Background:

The Chough is a member of the crow family, about the size of a jackdaw. They have an iridescent black plumage and a striking red curved beak and long red legs. They are largely coastal in distribution in Ireland with the maritime influence helping to maintain short swards which are optimal for access to the prey in the soil. They feed on insects and invertebrates that live in the soil, animal dung especially where the sward is short. A short sward is optimal. The Irish Chough population makes up about 60% of a geographically distinct and isolated NW European population of approximately 1,500 pairs.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Produce a suitable sward by developing an appropriate grazing plan to maintain a tightly grazed short sward throughout the year on the areas within the GLAS contract.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	Rolling is not permitted between the 15 th March and the 15 th July annually.
4.	Where a parcel is cut for silage/hay, only 1 cut can be taken per year.
5.	Heather, bracken and scrub (ARCs – see appendix 13) where present must be controlled where appropriate and only between 1 st September and 28 th February annually.
6.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40 kg N per ha per annum on parcels within the GLAS contract.
7.	The use of Pesticides is not permitted. Where noxious and/or invasive weeds are present, they must be controlled preferably by mechanical means; however spot treatment using pesticides may be required in some circumstances.

3. Corncrake

Objective:

Create and maintain cover and nesting shelter for Corncrake birds when they arrive from Africa throughout their breeding season (April to September).

Background:

The Corncrakes once bred throughout Ireland but because of the intensification of agriculture their distribution and numbers declined. Corncrakes are now mainly found in County Donegal and parts of West Connaught, particularly the western seaboard of counties Mayo and Galway. Corncrakes require vegetation which is at least 20cm (8 inches) high for the breeding season.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Produce a suitable cover of tall herbaceous vegetation when the meadow is closed off.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	Grazing, mowing, topping and/or other field operations requiring the use of machinery are not permitted from 15 th March to the 20 th August annually.
4.	The meadows must be mown annually, except when weather conditions make this impossible.
5.	Mowing must be carried out using the "centre-out" method. See Appendix 1a.
6.	Early cover areas must exist within the corncrake parcel and can be provided by creating or maintaining an area of tall herb vegetation (e.g. nettles, reed, cow parsley, iris but not trees or shrubs or other dense vegetation) in spring. These areas can also provide late cover following mowing in meadows. Provide at least 0.1 of a hectare for every 2 hectares of corncrake meadow.
7.	The early cover areas may be cut or grazed after the 10 th September annually.

8.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 30 kg N per ha per annum on parcels within the GLAS contract.
9.	Rushes, where present must be controlled annually, but not between 15th March and 20th August annually. The use of a weed wiper for control of rushes is permissible.
10.	Where noxious and/or invasive weeds are present, they must be controlled preferably by mechanical means but not between 15th March and 20th August annually; however spot treatment using pesticides may be required in some circumstances.

Recommendations

The mower must not exceed 3.6 metres in width and mowing should take place at low speed.

4. Geese and Swans

Objective:

To promote the production of a grass sward to feed overwintering geese and swans including the Whooper Swan, Greenland White Front Goose, Barnacle Goose and Brent Goose.

Background:

Ireland hosts a significant proportion of the European populations of Geese and Swans. Many of which are Red and Amber listed. Without intervention, local populations face disturbance.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bird Boxes, Bat Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements for Grassland Parcels:

1.	Produce a suitable grass sward.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS parcels selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	The sward height varies depending on the target species on your land but it must be between 5 -12 cm in height on average, by the 1 st October annually.
4.	Close off parcels from livestock from the 1 st of October to the 30th April of the following year, in each year of the contract.
5.	These parcels must be maintained in grass for the duration of the GLAS contract.
6.	Avoid disturbance of birds during periods of occupancy. Field operations requiring the use of tractor machinery should only be undertaken if necessary, during the period 1 st October to 30 th April annually.

Requirements for Tillage Parcels:

1.	Establish a winter cereal crop or a catch crop (in accordance with page 34 of this specification) by 15 th October annually. Where the participant opts for the catch crop option, it must remain in situ until the 15 th April annually.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS parcels selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	Avoid disturbance of birds during periods of occupancy. Field operations requiring the use of tractor machinery should only be undertaken if necessary, during the period 1 st November to 15 th April annually.

Note: Where the fencing of watercourses for bovines is a priority action, a derogation may be sought from Johnstown Castle not to fence the watercourse on parcels with Geese and Swans. The Derogation must be sought and approved by 31st December 2015. Where a derogation is approved, the participant will remain eligible for GLAS but will receive no payment for the fencing of watercourse action for the lengths concerned within the Derogation.

5. Grey Partridge

Objective:

To promote and maintain suitable breeding and foraging habitats for the Grey Partridge.

Background:

The Grey Partridge is a red listed bird of Conservation Concern in Ireland. The species has suffered a severe decline in numbers in recent years in Ireland. The last potentially sustainable wild population of Grey Partridge in Ireland is limited to Boora in West Offaly and to North Co. Dublin. The Department has selected a number of Priority areas with the assistance of NPWS, Birdwatch Ireland and the Irish Grey Partridge Conservation Trust. This action provides a grass and cereal based margin. The grass margin provides an appropriate nesting habitat and the mixed cereal margin creates a brood rearing habitat for Grey Partridge chicks.

Note: This action is mandatory for applicants with Grey Partridge approved LPIS parcel(s). Your advisor will be able to advise you as to whether you have eligible Grey Partridge LPIS parcels on your land. Where a participant also chooses arable grass margin in the same LPIS parcel as the Grey Partridge margin, the margins cannot overlap.

Natura 2000 designated lands or commonages are not eligible for this action.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margin, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Successfully establish a 12 metre margin: 4 metre (grass) and 8 metre (Grey Partridge Mix) by 31 st May 2016. Where the GLAS participant is using a 3 metre drill, he/she must successfully establish a 3 metre (grass) and 9 metre (Grey Partridge Mix) margin by 31 st May 2016.
2.	Establish along a full length of an existing field or LPIS parcel boundary. The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted. The 4 metre (or 3 metre depending on

	drill width) grass margin must be established from the edge of the field or LPIS parcel boundary with the 8 metre (or 9 metre depending on drill width) Grey Partridge Mix margin outside that. The margin cannot be grown in parallel 12 metre strips within a LPIS parcel or field.
3.	The minimum length of margin that must be delivered at farm level is 200 metres.
4.	The grass mix must consist of 70% Cocksfoot and 30% Timothy at the standard grass seed rate.
5.	Grey Partridge Mix must consist of Triticale, Kale, Lucerne, perennial chicory and fodder radish. See seeding rate below. The kale seed must be treated for flea beetle.
6.	Drilling is the preferred sowing method.
7.	Pre-sowing weed control can be used.
8.	After the crop has been successfully established, the use of pesticides is not permitted; except for the spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds.
9.	Fertiliser can be applied at a maximum of half rate for the crop prescribed in Statutory Instrument 31 of 2014.
10.	The margin must be fenced off and stockproof from the time it is sown.
11.	<p>The management regime for the 8* metre Grey Partridge Mix is as follows;</p> <p>Year 1 - Establish the 8 metre Grey Partridge Mix.</p> <p>Year 2 – Leave the entire 8 metre Grey Partridge Mix in situ</p> <p>Year 3 – Re-establish 4 metres of the 8 metre Grey Partridge Mix. Leave the other 4 metres in situ.</p> <p>Year 4 – Re-establish the other 4 meters of the 8 metre Grey Partridge Mix. Leave 4 metres in situ.</p> <p>Year 5 – Re-establish the first 4 meters of the 8 metre Grey Partridge Mix. Leave the other 4 metres in situ.</p> <p>*Note where the farmer is delivering the margin via a 3 metre drill, the management regime is as follows</p> <p>Year 1 - Establish the 9 metre Grey Partridge Mix.</p> <p>Year 2 – Leave the entire 9 metre Grey Partridge Mix in situ.</p> <p>Year 3 – Re-establish 6 metres of the 9 metre Grey Partridge Mix. Leave the other 3 metres in situ.</p> <p>Year 4 – Re-establish the other 3 meters of the 9 metre Grey Partridge Mix in situ. Leave 6 metres in situ.</p>

	Year 5 – Re-establish the first 6 meters of the 9 metre Grey Partridge Mix. Leave the other 3 metres in situ.
12.	<p>The management regime for the 4* metre grass margin is as follows;</p> <p>Year 1 - Establish the 4 metre grass margin. Top/mulch if required</p> <p>Year 2 – Topping/Mulching after 31st August and before 15th January</p> <p>Year 3 –Leave in situ</p> <p>Year 4 – Topping/Mulching after 31st August and before 15th January</p> <p>Year 5 – Leave in situ</p> <p>Note where the farmer is delivering the margin via a 3 metre drill, the management regime is as follows;</p> <p>Year 1 - Establish the 3 metre grass margin. Top/mulch if required</p> <p>Year 2 – Topping/Mulching after 31st August and before 15th January</p> <p>Year 3 –Leave in situ</p> <p>Year 4 – Topping/Mulching after 31st August and before 15th January</p> <p>Year 5 – Leave in situ</p>

Seed Mix and Seeding rate for the Grey Partridge Mix:

CROP TYPE	Minimum Seed Rate
Triticale	40 kg/ha
Kale	3kg/ha
Lucerne	4 kg/ha
Perennial chicory	2 kg/ha
Fodder radish	1 kg/ha

Further information:

For a map of eligible Grey Partridge land areas - see Appendix 1b.

6. Hen Harrier

Objective:

To promote the maintenance and creation of suitable breeding and foraging habitats for the Hen Harrier.

Background:

Hen Harriers are suffering serious population declines nationally and regionally. By improving and managing the habitat of the Hen Harrier you are also benefitting an assemblage of birds including Skylark, Snipe, Meadow Pipit, Curlew, Merlin and Short-Eared Owl. Hen harriers require a mosaic of habitat types. Extensively grazed pasture consisting of taller tussock vegetation, rushy pastures, heather, scrub, and hedgerows are all suitable as hunting/foraging habitats during the breeding season. Typical nesting habitats include: heather, bog and scrub areas.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Produce a suitable sward. This may include heather and/or scrub where that is currently and continues to be eligible for payment, under the Basic Payment Scheme. This heather and/or scrub must continue to be managed appropriately to optimise structural diversity for the benefit of the Hen Harrier in the parcel or field.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	Traditional grazing practices that promote and maintain the development of tall and tussock vegetation (>10cm high) throughout the parcel must be undertaken. The parcel(s) cannot be grazed intensively by sheep.
4.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40 kg N per ha per annum on parcels within the GLAS contract.
5.	Noxious and invasive weeds must be controlled by spot spraying or mechanically.
6.	Parcels with rush cover are valuable to the harrier, with a target rush cover of up to 70%,

	with tussock type vegetation between the rushes. This can be delivered by either grazing and/or topping. If grazing does not prevent rushes from exceeding 70% cover, mowing/topping may be necessary; however where this is practiced it must be in alternating strips of 10m on a rotational basis over the course of the contract.
7.	Hedgerows on Hen Harrier parcels cannot be cut between 1 st March and the 1 st October annually.

Recommendations:

If choosing this action, hedgerow rejuvenation, hedgerow planting and wild bird cover actions are recommended complementary actions which should be selected where relevant to the farm. Selecting these actions can greatly enhance the habitat value for the hen harrier especially where there is a low density of existing landscape features. Hedgerow management should aim to achieve intact and dense hedgerows.

If an area has been covered by dense rushes for a number of years (e.g. as evidenced by lodging of rush or encroachment of scrub) and the farmer now wishes to commence controlling rushes, he/she should contact NPWS in advance, to establish if the site holds roosting/nesting harriers.

7. Twite (A, B and C)

Objective:

To develop and maintain nesting and foraging habitats for Twite birds during the breeding and wintering season.

Background:

The Twite is a Red-listed Bird of Conservation Concern in Ireland with recent data indicating a decline in number of 78% since the 1970s. The Twite breeding season occurs on moorland-type farmland habitats (typically characterised by being extensively-grazed dry siliceous heath, often with areas of dense Bracken). Controlled grazing at targeted times of the year on suitable sites will encourage heather and Bracken growth which will develop a suitable nesting habitat for Twite birds.

Actions separated into Twite A, B and C.

Twite A: Semi-natural/Semi-improved Grassland Field Management Option for Breeding Twite.

Twite B: Improved Grassland Field Management Option for Breeding Twite.

Twite C: Twite Winter Feeding Option.

GLAS has three different prescriptions for the Twite depending on the type of vegetation and species mix that exist on the LPIS parcels selected for this action. Your advisor will advise you on which of the option(s) you should take. Only one Twite option can be selected per LPIS parcel.

Twite A

The aim of this option is to create ideal foraging conditions for Twite within grassland fields that have typically, been subject to relatively low levels of agricultural improvement, such that they contain a range of target plant species on which Twite feed (e.g. Sorrel, Autumn Hawkbit, Cat's ear and Dandelion). Actions within this option are designed to encourage seeding of these plants by either late mowing or appropriate grazing management.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (boxes/sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological

Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Produce a suitable sward.
2.	The action must be delivered on full LPIS parcel(s).The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	<u>Grazing:</u> Where the parcel is grazed, approximately 50% of the field/parcel should be grazed from 15 th April to 15 th June with the other approximately 50% grazed from 16 th June to 15 th August annually.
4.	<u>Mowing:</u> Where the parcel is mowed for hay or silage, this cannot be undertaken between 15 th April and 15 th August annually.
5.	Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds.
6.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 35 kg N per ha per annum on parcels within the GLAS contract.
7.	Topping is not permitted between 15 th April and 15 th August annually.

Twite B

The aim of this option is to create ideal foraging conditions for Twite within grassland fields that have been substantially improved, such that they currently contain few (if any) of the target plant species which Twite feed on (e.g. Sorrel, Autumn Hawkbit, Cat's ear and Dandelion).

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (boxes/sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Sow and establish a 12m wide margin by 31 st May 2016.
2.	The action must be delivered along the full length of an existing field or LPIS parcel(s) boundary. The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
3.	These margins cannot be grown in parallel strips within the LPIS parcel or field.
4.	The minimum linear length is 50 metres.
5.	The margin must be established by chain harrowing, broadcasting the seed and rolling.
6.	Sow a specific seed mix (appendix 14) which contains at least 15% each of Dandelion, Sorrel, Cats Ear and Yellow Rattle. The remainder of the mix may be made up from any of the remaining plants in Appendix 14. This mix must be sown at a minimum rate of 1g for 10m ² (1kg/ha).
7.	The margin must be fenced off and stockproof from 1 st April until 31 st August annually.
8.	Mowing or topping is not permitted from 1 st April until 31 st August annually.
9.	Between the 31 st August and the 15 th April annually, the margin must be grazed and/or mown. If mown, all cuttings must be removed.
10.	Additional establishment actions may be required in subsequent years to ensure the presence of appropriate seeding species within the margin.

Twite C

The aim of this option is to sow a seed crop mix that provides winter food sources for Twite. It is likely that this will benefit other farmland birds and fauna. The winter feed option is a spring-sown crop that is left un-harvested over winter to provide food for farmland birds.

The minimum area to be sown is 0.25 hectares and the maximum area for payment is 3 hectares.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (boxes/sand), Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Successfully establish a Twite Winter Feed crop by sowing a suitable seed mix by the 31 st May 2016.
2.	This action must be delivered on a full LPIS parcel. LPIS parcels selected must be marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application. The Twite Winter Feed Crop must remain in the same place for the duration of the GLAS contract.
3.	The crop mix can be sown either annually or bi-annually (see example 1 and 2 below) in springtime, but not later than the 31 st of May annually, and the crop must remain in place until the following 15 th of March annually. The 1 year mix must contain a cereal (either oats or triticale) and at least one species from the following: Oilseed Rape, Radish, Mustard or Turnip. The 2 year mix must contain a cereal (either oats or triticale) and kale.
4.	Drilling is the preferred sowing method; however broadcasting of the seed is permitted. If you are broadcasting, increase the seed rates by between one third (for smaller seeds) and a half (for larger seeds), or roll immediately post sowing, to ensure appropriate establishment.
5.	Pre-sowing weed control can be used.
6.	Pesticides cannot be applied post sowing. However spot treatment with herbicide for noxious weeds and invasive species is permitted.
7.	Fertiliser is allowed at a maximum of half rate for the crop prescribed in SI 31 2014, for the relevant cereal crop in the mix.

8.	Each parcel of Twite Winter Feed must remain fenced or otherwise inaccessible to livestock from the time of establishment to the 15 th of March for annual mixes and from the time of establishment to the 15 th of March in year two for bi-annual mixes. In the year in which parcels are being fully replanted, livestock may enter the parcel from 15 th March to planting time to aid in the decomposition of the trash.
9.	No harvesting can take place.

Recommendations

Consideration should be given to growing the crop adjacent to cover. For example, beside hedgerows or near woodland or scrub. It may also be grown along a stream or river where it can have the dual benefit of acting as a buffer margin. However, it must be placed outside the 2 metre buffer zone along a watercourse.

Example 1: One year seed mixes that can be planted annually – can be mixed together

Mix of Seed	Rate of Seed
Oats and Mustard	75 kg/ha of oats 10 kg/ha of mustard
Triticale and Mustard	75 kg/ha of triticale 10 kg/ha of mustard
Triticale and Oilseed Rape	75 kg/ha of triticale 3 kg/ha of oilseed rape

Example 2: Two Year Mix

Mix of Seed	Rate of Seed
Establish half the plot with oats/triticale and half with kale	75 kg/ ha of oats/triticale 3 kg/ha of kale
Kale remains in situ and re-establish cereal crop	75 kg/ha of oats/triticale
Re-establish half as kale and half as cereal	75 kg/ha of oats/triticale 3 kg/ha of kale
Kale remains in situ and re-establish cereal crop	75 kg/ha of oats/triticale
Re-establish half as kale and half as cereal	75 kg/ha of oats/triticale 3kg/ha of kale

For a map of eligible Twite land areas - see Appendix 1c.

Catch Crops

Objective

To establish a catch crop that will absorb nutrients and prevent leaching in the autumn/winter period.

Background:

The primary aim for catch crops is for soil protection during fallow periods over the winter period. There is a reduction in soil erosion during heavy rainfall periods from reduced surface run-off and increased water infiltration. While protecting soil against exposure to the elements with foliage, cover crop roots break and condition the soil preventing slumping, thus ensuring easier cultivations and better soil tilth the following spring. Depending on the species, catch crops increase the absorption of residual nitrogen and reduce nitrogen leachate from soil.

Note: This action is only applicable on LPIS parcels declared as 'arable' in 2015.

Excluding where catch crops are grown as equivalence for crop diversification, they may be rotated on different LPIS parcels each year of your contract. Where catch crops are rotated, the area sown each year must be at least equal in size to the contract area established in year 1 and the relevant parcel(s) selected must be notified to DAFM through the BPS application annually.

This action is separated into Whole Parcel (WP) and Part Parcel (PP).

Catch Crops WP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Minimum Tillage, Rare Breeds, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance

Catch Crops PP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Environmental Management of Fallow Land PP, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture PP, Rare Breeds, Traditional Hay Meadow PP, Wild Bird Cover PP

Requirements:

1.	Establish a catch crop annually by the 15 th September either by broadcasting or drilling.
2.	Minimum area 10 ha (Priority Action) or 4 ha (General Action) and the maximum area is 32 ha. This area can be rotated from one year to the next.
3.	The action can be delivered on full or split LPIS parcel(s). Where the action is on a split parcel it must be digitised out and marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application.
4.	Use light cultivation techniques (i.e. shallow grubbing). Ploughing is not permitted.
5.	Sow a suitable cover crop which must consist of at least 2 species in an integral mix from the list set out below.
6.	The under sowing or sowing grass crops is not permitted.
7.	The catch crops must remain in situ from the date of sowing to the 1 st December annually.
8.	While grazing of catch crops is permitted, this cannot take place until after the 1 st December annually and participants should ensure it only takes place on parcels where soil erosion is not considered by your GLAS advisor to be an issue.

List of Prescribed Catch Crops

COVER CROP SPECIES	SEED RATE KG/HA	COVER CROP SPECIES	SEED RATE KG/HA
Buckwheat	35 – 50	Rye	70 – 90
Crimson Clover	10 – 15	Tillage Radish	5
Berseem Clover	10 – 15	Vetch	12
Forage/Fodder Rape	3 – 5	Leafy Turnip	5
Mustard	15 – 20	Peas	30
Oats (& Black Oats)	75 – 100	Beans	100 – 120
Phacelia	5 – 10		

Additional species may also be considered eligible provided the objectives of the measure are met – email glas@agriculture.gov.ie

Note: Spraying volunteer cereals is permitted within the Catch Crops to prevent a carryover of disease through the green bridge

Commonage Management Plan (CMP)

Objective:

To ensure that commonage lands are appropriately grazed and managed to ensure they remain in GAEC and are compliant with eligibility criteria.

Commonages make up approximately 422,000 hectares of the land area in Ireland. The existing cross compliance requirements set down good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC) and statutory management requirements (SMR's) which must be followed to ensure the sustainable management of all soils in Ireland, including commonages, many of which are blanket bogs. These peatlands provide a wide range of benefits through agriculture, biodiversity maintenance, carbon storage and sequestration, forestry, water regulation and flood attenuation, fuel for electricity generation and turf for homes, employment, land for wind energy, amenity areas, peat for horticulture and land for housing and infrastructure. Further conditions for certain Natura Sites is set out in appendix 15.

Note: a GLAS participant will be paid on the GLAS Commonage Area for this action. The GLAS Commonage Area includes certain exclusions specifically Bog, Habitat, Marsh, Rough Grazing and Scrub. This is because the Department recognises that these areas deliver significant biodiversity value on commonages.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel is:

Rare Breeds.

Note: Where a farmer has shares on more than one commonage, he/she will be required to indicate that they are willing to sign up to a CMP on all other commonages should one become available. Failure to enter into a CMP on second and subsequent commonage where your first commonage has a CMP will result in your GLAS application being rejected/ terminated and all payments recouped.

Requirements:

1.	Only 1 GLAS Advisor is allowed to prepare and submit a CMP for each individual commonage.
2.	A CMP must list all the herd numbers who are signed up to and who have agreed to be bound by the conditions and farming requirements set out in the CMP.

3.	Each herd number on a CMP must have their individual minimum number of ewe equivalents by 31st December 2016 and retain for the remainder of the GLAS Contract
4.	Each CMP must reach the total minimum for the commonage by 31st December 2018 and retain for the remainder of the GLAS Contract.
5.	The advisor and individuals within the CMP can decide how the total minimum number of ewe equivalents will be delivered once each herdnumber on the CMP keeps their individual minimum ewe equivalent by 31st December 2016 to the end of the GLAS contract.
6.	A CMP cannot exceed the total maximum ewe equivalents for the commonage at any time during the GLAS contract.
7.	All livestock must be marked with the herd owners flock colours or markings.
8.	The GLAS advisor in drawing up a CMP for a commonage must be cognisant of the soil type and vegetation on the commonage when prescribing an appropriate grazing regime and other management practices for a commonage. In addition, the GLAS advisor must consider if there is a risk of soil/peat erosion.
9.	The advisor must clearly state all activities which can be carried out on the commonage in terms of controlled burning, control of dumping etc. The advisor must also clearly set out within the 5 year CMP contract when and where any of these activities will be undertaken on the GLAS map accompanying your application. Note NPWS approval may be required for some of these activities.
10.	Each herd number must submit their annual sheep census to the Department.
11.	The reference area of the commonage as declared on the 2015 BPS, must not decrease over the course of the GLAS contract.

Coppicing of Hedgerows

Objective:

To rejuvenate overgrown hedgerows, increase biodiversity and enhance the visual landscape.

Background:

Mature hedgerows give the Irish landscape its distinctive character and field pattern and provide an important wildlife habitat especially for woodland flora and fauna. Hedgerows provide a barrier and shelter for livestock, reduces the spread of disease and define the farm boundaries. Coppicing is a way of rejuvenating hedgerows.

Note: External farm boundaries CANNOT be entered for this action and will not be paid unless the external farm boundary adjoins a public road, a private laneway or a watercourse or water body. You must have control of both sides of the hedgerow being coppiced for ongoing maintenance.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Catch Crops WP, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP and Traditional Orchard.

Requirements:

1.	Coppice all selected hedgerows by 28 th February 2017. Note hedges can only be coppiced between 1 st September and 28 th February annually.
2.	The minimum linear length that must be coppiced is 10 metres and this must be in a single continuous length.
3.	The maximum linear length that can be coppiced on a holding is 1,000 metres.
4.	The location and length (metres) to be coppiced must be identified on the selected LPIS parcels and marked on the map submitted.
5.	Coppicing must be carried out with a chainsaw or circular saw. Cut stem to less than 15cm

	from ground level.
6.	Infilling must be carried out if gaps are present in the hedgerow that will not be filled by re-growth from the coppiced hedgerow. Plant a minimum of 4 plants per metre consisting of whitethorn, blackthorn or holly in line with the existing hedge. Any plants that die must be replaced during the next dormant season. Infilling of gaps must be undertaken by 28 th February 2017.
7.	All newly coppiced hedges in a grass or tillage field must be fenced off and protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is coppiced. However where the coppiced hedgerow bounds a private laneway, public road or watercourse, fencing is not required on the laneway/road or water body side as long as the hedge is not being damaged by livestock. The fence must be stockproof and fit for purpose.
8.	Grass and other competing vegetation must be controlled.
9.	Plants must be trimmed over the course of the contract to ensure a dense hedgerow develops.
10.	Individual mature standard trees within the selected hedgerow must not be coppiced.

Further information:

As whitethorn and blackthorn are potential carriers of diseases that are harmful to plants in the wider environment, it is mandatory that producers of these plants are registered and inspected by DAFM to ensure their freedom of these diseases. To check if your supplier is properly registered, either email plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie or call 01-5058885. Participants should ensure that they retain the plant passport that accompanied the plants upon purchase, for the duration of the GLAS contract.

Species that are suitable for coppicing include Alder, Blackthorn, Ash, Birch, Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore and Willow.

Further information is available from the following websites

<http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk>

<http://www.irishhedgerows.weebly.com>

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk>

<http://www.teagasc.ie>

Environmental Management of Fallow Land

Objective:

To provide food and habitat for ground nesting birds other fauna and insects throughout the nesting season.

Background:

Fallow land in arable rotations has been a traditional feature across Europe for much of its agricultural history. However, changes in arable production during the latter half of the twentieth century along with technological improvements have led to reduced areas of fallow land. Fallow or set-aside land has multiple benefits for biodiversity including benefits for: breeding birds, wintering birds from crop stubbles and weed seeds; small mammal (and their predators) and insect and other invertebrates.

Note: This action is only applicable on LPIS parcels declared as 'arable' in 2015. The action cannot move during the GLAS contract.

This action is separated into Whole Parcel (WP) and Part Parcel (PP)

Environmental Management of Fallow Land WP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand)

Environmental Management of Fallow Land PP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Catch Crops PP, Wild Bird Cover PP

Requirements:

1.	Establish a fallow area through sowing a grass seed mix by 31 st of May 2016.
2.	The minimum area is 0.25 ha and the maximum area is 3 ha.
3.	The action can be delivered on full or split LPIS parcels. Where the action is on a split parcel it must be digitised out and marked on the map submitted.
4.	Sow a grass seed mix containing at least 60% Cocksfoot or Timothy or a combination of these. Grass seed labels and receipts should be kept for the duration of the GLAS

	contract.
5.	Pre-sowing weed control can be used.
6.	After the crop is sown the use of pesticides is not permitted, except for the spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds (see appendix 16).
7.	Use of fertilisers (chemical or organic) is not permitted.
8.	The parcel must be mulched or mown at least once a year, but not between March 1 st and September 1 st each year. Off takes are not allowed.
9.	The parcel must be fenced off and stockproof and grazing by livestock is not permitted. Where a parcel is split, a suitable fence must be in place to prevent livestock from entering the fallow land.
10.	The fallow parcel cannot be used as a storage area for any materials (e.g. straw bales, big-baled silage, farm yard manure etc).

Farmland Habitat (Private Natura)

Objective:

To avoid farming practices that cause environmental damage and protect vulnerable habitats such as wetlands, which in turn helps to safeguard animals and plants which occupy them.

Background:

The aim of Natura sites is to conserve valuable and threatened species and habitats.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese & Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A, B & C), Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance and Traditional Hay Meadow WP.

Requirements:

1.	A Sustainable Management Plan must be completed for each site code which contains private Natura LPIS parcels on your holding. It must address the following
	a. Specify how the parcel is normally farmed and managed i.e. grazing only, tillage etc.
	b. Where the parcel is normally grazed, specify the livestock type and number of months grazing takes place on the parcel(s).
	c. Detail a general site description and specify the dominant habitat type.
	d. Set stocking levels that avoid eutrophication, overgrazing, undergrazing and erosion.
2.	Supplementary feeding of meal is only permitted on areas where it is currently practiced and appropriate and where the GLAS advisor is of the view that supplementary feeding of meal will not impact on the Natura site. Where it is practiced, the meal troughs should be moved frequently to avoid poaching.
3.	Invasive and noxious weeds (see appendix 16) must be controlled. Pesticides are permitted for spot treatment application.

Further information:

For a full list of ARC's – see Appendix 13.

For a full list of Conditions for Certain Natura Sites - see Appendix 15.

Laying of Hedgerows

Objective:

To rejuvenate overgrown hedgerows, increase biodiversity and enhance the visual landscape.

Background:

Mature hedgerows give the Irish landscape its distinctive character and field pattern and provide an important wildlife habitat especially for woodland flora and fauna. Hedgerows provide a barrier and shelter for livestock, stop spread of disease and define the farm boundaries. Laying is a way of rejuvenating hedgerows.

Note: External farm boundaries CANNOT be entered for this action and will not be paid unless the external farm boundary adjoins a public road, a private laneway or a watercourse or water body. You must have control of both sides of the hedgerow for laying and for ongoing maintenance.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Catch Crops WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP and Traditional Orchards.

Requirements:

1.	Lay all selected hedgerows by 28 th February 2017. Note hedges can only be laid between 1 st September and 28 th February annually.
2.	The minimum linear length that must be laid is 10 metres and this must be in a single continuous length.
3.	The maximum linear length that can be laid on a holding is 1,000 metres.
4.	The location and length (metres) to be laid must be identified on the selected LPIS parcels and marked on the map submitted.
5.	Laying cannot be carried out using heavy machinery.

6.	Infilling must be carried out if gaps are present in the hedgerow that will not be filled by re-growth from the coppiced hedgerow. Plant a minimum of 4 plants per metre consisting of whitethorn, blackthorn or holly in line with the existing hedge. Any plants that die must be replaced during the next dormant season. Infilling of gaps must be undertaken by 28 th February 2017.
7.	All newly laid hedges in a grass or tillage field must be fenced off and protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is laid. However where the laid hedgerow bounds a private laneway, public road or watercourse, fencing is not required on the road or water body side as long as the hedge is not being damaged by livestock. The fence must be stockproof and fit for purpose.
8.	Individual mature standard trees within the selected hedgerow must not be laid.
9.	Grass and other competing vegetation must be controlled
10.	Plants must be trimmed over the course of the contract to ensure a dense hedgerow develops.

Further information:

As whitethorn and blackthorn are potential carriers of diseases that are harmful to plants in the wider environment, it is mandatory that producers of these plants are registered and inspected by DAFM to ensure their freedom of these diseases. To check if your supplier is properly registered, either email plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie or call 01-5058885. Participants should ensure that they retain the plant passport that accompanied the plants upon purchase, for the duration of the GLAS contract.

Species that are suitable for coppicing include Alder, Blackthorn, Ash, Birch, Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore and Willow.

For guidance on laying - see Appendix 11 and also the following websites.

<http://www.crann.ie>

<http://www.hedgelaying.ie>

<http://www.teagasc.ie>

Low Emission Slurry Spreading

Objective:

To improve the recycling of organic fertiliser and to contribute to reduced nitrous oxide emissions, ammonia emissions and odours.

Background:

The method and timing of slurry application are two main factors that determine the utilization efficiency of these nutrients by the growing crop, whether grass or arable. Using low emission technology improves the utilisation efficiency of slurry compared to the traditional splash-plate. Other benefits include, reduced phosphorus run-off, a wider window of opportunity to apply slurry, reduced tainting of the grazing sward and reduced smell from slurry spreading.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (ABC), Catch Crops WP & PP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP & PP, Minimum Tillage, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP & PP and Wild Bird Cover WP & PP.

Requirements:

1.	All of the slurry applied on the farm (produced and/or imported) must be spread by one or a combination of the following methods for each year of the contract. a) Band spreading b) Injection systems c) Trailing shoe
2.	All slurry must be managed and spread in compliance with Statutory Instrument 31 of 2014 (the Nitrates Regulations).
3.	Provide documentary evidence to confirm; the spreading method used and the volumes spread on the holding. For example, a calculation of slurry produced, imported and spread and/or a receipt from the contractor or other evidence as required.
4.	Farmer must indicate on his annual slurry declaration return to Johnstown Castle the LPIS

parcels where the slurry was spread.

Low Input Permanent Pasture

Objective:

To promote a grassland management system that through appropriate grazing levels and restriction on fertiliser and pesticide use results in a more diverse sward with an increase in flora and fauna.

Background:

Permanent pastures extensively grazed and managed with low inputs sustain a greater variety of plants and wildlife.

This action is separated into whole parcel (WP) and part parcel (PP)

Low Input Permanent Pasture WP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection of Archaeological Monuments (Grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance

Low Input Permanent Pasture PP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Catch Crops PP, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Rare Breeds, Traditional Hay Meadow PP, Wild Bird Cover PP

Notes: Where the Low Input Permanent Pasture parcel is situated within a designated Natura 2000 site, farmers can choose to be paid for this action rather than Natura once the parcel complies with the Low Input Permanent Pasture Specification and they comply with the Natura designation.

Farmers who apply for a Nitrates Derogation in any year of the GLAS contract will be ineligible for this action and there will be clawbacks of any Low Input Permanent Pasture payments made to date.

Participants who select this action must have a grazing enterprise of owned livestock on the holding.

Requirements:

1.	Select a suitable pasture.
2.	The action can be delivered on full or split LPIS parcel(s). Where the action is on a split parcel, it must be digitised out and marked on the map submitted. Parcels must be fenced and stockproof from the commencement date of the GLAS contract.
3.	The maximum area payable is 10 ha of Low Input Permanent Pasture and/or Traditional Hay Meadow.
4.	Selected LPIS parcels must not have been cultivated in the last 8 years and must have been declared as forage on the SPS for the previous 8 years.
5.	The pasture must contain a minimum of four grass species (excluding Ryegrasses), for example cocksfoot, timothy, bent grasses, fescues, sweet vernal, Yorkshire fog, etc and a minimum of three other non-grass plant species, for example plantain, chickweed, trefoils etc and these must be reasonably dispersed throughout the field. There must be less than 30% Ryegrass cover.
6.	The sward must be maintained by grazing and there must be a grazing enterprise of owned livestock on the holding.
7.	Parcels cannot be cut for hay or silage.
8.	Parcels cannot be topped between 15 th March and the 15 th July annually.
9.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40 kg N per ha per annum.
10.	Lime may be applied in accordance with soil analysis results, if it has been traditionally spread on the parcels.
11.	Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds and rushes. Where present, rushes must be controlled either mechanically, by weed wiping and/or by spot spraying. While weed wiping and/or spot spraying can take place between 15 th March and 15 th July, topping to control rushes cannot take place between these dates.
12.	Supplementary meal feeding may take place on these parcels, provided meal troughs are moved to avoid poaching. Where the parcel is a Natura parcel, the GLAS advisor and participant should ensure that the supplementary feeding of meal does not impact negatively on the Natura site.

Note: In GLAS there will be no cross compensation allowed between Low Input Permanent Pasture and Traditional Hay Meadows. Therefore if a farmer commits to deliver 5 hectares of Low Input

Permanent Pasture and 5 hectares of Traditional Hay Meadow, they must deliver 5 hectares of each i.e. they cannot deliver 6 hectares of Low Input Permanent Pasture and 4 hectares of Traditional Hay Meadow.

Minimum Tillage

Objective:

To improve soil structure and increase soil organic matter.

Background:

Minimum tillage means sowing a crop without inverting the soil i.e. the soil cannot be ploughed.

Minimum tillage has many advantages for both the farmer and the land. It can save fuel and time for the farmer. It reduces damage done to soil by rain, the breakdown of soil structure and reduces the formation of a hard pan in the soil. This measure also protects archaeological monuments within the topsoil and subsurface of the soil.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Catch Crops WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance

Requirements:

1.	Establish a crop using minimum tillage i.e. It must be sown without inverting the soil (soil cannot be ploughed).
2.	The minimum area is 10 ha where it is taken as a priority action and 4 ha where it is taken as a general action.
3.	This action must be taken on the same full LPIS parcel(s). The LPIS plots selected must be marked on the map submitted. The action must be maintained on the same LPIS parcel(s) for the entire contract period.
4.	The action must be in place on the next crop establishment following approval into the scheme and for all subsequent years of the contract.

Planting a Grove of Native Trees

Objective:

To encourage the planting of small groups of trees to provide a valuable pocket habitat and opportunity for carbon sequestration.

Background:

Small groups or groves of trees provide a wide range of ecological benefits and create pocket habitats for both plants and animals. These benefits are increased further through the use of native tree species which colonised Ireland naturally after the last Ice Age. This measure will introduce more native trees into the Irish landscape, promoting our native biodiversity.

Note: Trees cannot be planted in hedgerows that are being entered for the coppicing or laying of hedgerow option or the planting of new hedgerow action. Trees cannot be planted on Natura land.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Establish a grove of native trees in a single location only, i.e. you cannot plant the trees in a number of locations in a LPIS parcel or field.
2.	Minimum area of 0.05 ha with 250 plants and maximum area of 0.09 ha with 450 plants. The plants must be a minimum of 40cm tall when planted.
3.	Identify the location on the LPIS parcel selected and mark on the map submitted.
4.	Plant in the first dormant season after you receive written approval into GLAS and in any event before the 31 March 2016.
5.	Use native tree species only, as listed in Appendix 4.
6.	Use plants that are derived from suitable seed sources from within Ireland which are regarded as being indigenous in nature. See Note A below.
7.	A minimum of 2 native species from Appendix 4 should be planted.

8.	Consider the physical conditions of each site, e.g. soil type, drainage, exposure, etc., and choose species that will succeed in such sites.
9.	Planting cannot take place within the vicinity of overhead wires (See Note B below), within 20 m of railway line(s) or within 60 m of a dwelling house(s), or within 5 m of a watercourse
11.	Trees must be planted in rows 2 metres apart with a distance of 1 metre between the plants within the rows.
12.	Replace failed or dead trees during the next dormant season.
13.	Trees must be protected from livestock and fenced off from the time of planting until the end of the contract.
14.	Grass and other competing vegetation must be controlled around the trees, until they have become established.

Note A: These plants should only be purchased from producers and suppliers who are registered under the Forest Reproductive Material Directive, and who can provide a 'Provenance Declaration Form' (See Appendix 6) for the material purchased, certifying that the plants used are derived from suitable seed sources from within Ireland which are regarded as being indigenous in nature. This requirement is intended to help protect Ireland's gene pool regarding native trees.

Note B: The required clearance distance depends on the voltage of the overhead line.

Power line type	Clearance distance (from centre of line)
Low voltage (230/400V)	5 m
10 kV and 38 kV	10 m
110 kV	31 m
220 kV	34 m
400 kV	37 m
Note: All trees must be outside their falling distance from line support structures.	

For a list of native tree species for the planting of a Grove of Native Trees option, see Appendix 4.

Planting New Hedgerow

Objective:

To establish new hedgerows on farms to increase biodiversity, to enhance the visual landscape and to help protect water quality.

Background:

Mature hedgerows give the Irish landscape its distinctive character and field pattern and provide an important wildlife habitat, especially for woodland flora and fauna. Hedgerows provide a barrier and shelter for livestock, stop the spread of disease and define the farm boundaries.

Where the Planting New Hedgerow action is taken on a farm boundary, the GLAS participant must ensure it is planted in such a manner that he/she has control of both sides of the new hedgerow and that he/she can maintain both sides of the new hedgerow. Note, where a fence has been erected under TAMS, the Planting of New Hedgerow Action cannot be planted inside of this fence. Trees cannot be planted on Natura land.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Planting A Grove of Native Trees, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (Grassland), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (Tillage), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance and Traditional Orchards.

Requirements:

1.	Plant 6 plants per metre in a double row of whitethorn and/or blackthorn and/or holly by 31st March 2016.
2.	The minimum linear length that must be planted is 10 metres and this must be in a single continuous length
3.	The maximum length for which GLAS funding is available is 200 metres per holding.
4.	The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. The new hedge must be a standalone hedge and not placed against an existing hedgerow or stone wall.

5.	Plants must be purchased from registered producers or registered growers – see below.
6.	All newly planted hedges whether planted in a grass or tillage field must be fenced off and protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is planted. The fence must be stockproof and fit for purpose.
7.	Grass and other competing vegetation must be controlled.
8.	Plants must be trimmed over the course of the contract to ensure a dense hedgerow develops.
9.	Failed or dead plants must be replaced at the earliest possible planting opportunity.

The Planting New Hedgerow Action cannot overlap with the Planting a Grove of Native Trees Option or the Traditional Orchards Option.

As whitethorn and blackthorn are potential carriers of diseases that are harmful to plants in the wider environment, it is mandatory that producers of these plants are registered and inspected by DAFM to ensure their freedom of these diseases. To check if your supplier is properly registered, either email plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie or call 01-5058885. Participants should ensure that they retain the plant passport that accompanied the plants upon purchase, for the duration of the GLAS contract.

Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments

Objective:

To enhance and maintain visual archaeological monuments in the farm landscape.

Background:

All known archaeological monuments in the state are marked on maps and included on a list of monuments (The Record of Monuments and Places). This action aims to enhance and maintain archaeological monuments visible in both tillage and grassland landscapes. All monuments entered for this action must be visible and must be on parcels with a reference area i.e. be on UAA.

Note: Only monuments on The Record of Monuments and Places list and that are visible in the opinion of the advisor on the LPIS parcel(s) are eligible for this action. Monuments on Commonage land are not eligible for this action. Monuments in farmyards are not eligible for payment in this action.

There are two options:

1. Establish and maintain a buffer margin around a visible archaeological monument in a tillage parcel(s).
2. Managing vegetation around a visible archaeological monument in an eligible grassland parcel(s).

Option 1: Establish and maintain a buffer margin around a visible monument in a tillage parcel(s)

The aim of this option is to create a buffer margin to protect and maintain visible archaeological monuments in a tillage field. If you have monuments on a tillage parcel(s) and you take this action, you must take Option 1 i.e. put in place a grass margin.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margin, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Rare Breeds, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance and Traditional Orchards.

Requirements:

1.	Establish a 10 metre wide grass margin by sowing a grass seed mix by 31 st May 2016.
2.	The action must be delivered on a LPIS parcel(s). The monument(s) must be clearly identified on the map accompanying your GLAS application.
3.	The minimum number of monuments is 1.
4.	The margin must extend from the external outer boundary of the monument. The margin must be established by light cultivation techniques – i.e. no ploughing is permitted.
5.	Soil cultivation or tractor operations cannot be carried out within the margin once established.
6.	The margin must be maintained by hand mowing or strimming throughout the year and for the duration of the contract.
7.	Grazing by livestock is permitted provided that no damage is caused to the monument.
8.	Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds (see appendix 16).
9.	Where there is encroaching vegetation (excluding established healthy trees) on/near the monument, this must be controlled but not between 1 st March and 31 st August annually. Note roots of plants cannot be removed. Further detail on this is set out in option 2 below.

Option 2: Managing vegetation around a visible archaeological monument in an eligible grassland parcel(s)

The aim of this option is to control certain types of re-seeded or quickly colonising trees and invasive woody plants and other problematic plants around a visible archaeological monument.

Note: Any proposed works to a Recorded Monument that involves digging/ ground disturbance must be notified in advance to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their consideration.

Note: Care must also be taken to ensure that the proposed treatment of trees and/or other plant species, i.e. felling, lopping, coppicing, pollarding, pruning, cutting, thrashing or spraying is consistent with the provisions of the Forestry Act 1946.

Note: Under no circumstances should burning take place on or near the monument, as this can also cause damage to underlying archaeological deposits.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Cough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Hen Harrier, Twite (A & B), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP and Traditional Orchards.

1.	Manage vegetation on or around a visible monument.
2.	The action must be delivered on a LPIS parcel(s). The monument(s) must be clearly identified on the map accompanying your GLAS application.
3.	Minimum number of monuments is 1.
4.	Remove all encroaching vegetation (excluding established healthy trees) on/near the monument. Roots of plants cannot be removed.
5.	All works should be done with hand tools (e.g. with a saw, slash hook, secateurs and/or pruning shears) or motor-manually (e.g. with a chainsaw/brush cutter/trimmer). Tractors or diggers cannot be used to cut or remove vegetation.
6.	Small trees and plants like gorse, whins, rhododendron, laurel and other individual plants should be removed by cutting at the base and treating the stump with an appropriate herbicide to prevent re-growth.
7.	Larger trees should be pruned to above head height to open up access to the site or monument. Pollarding of trees is allowed.
8.	Management of vegetation must NOT be carried out between 1st March and 31st August annually. The one exception to this rule is the cutting or thrashing (flailing) of bracken and ferns which can be carried out in the middle of June.
9.	Remove dead or unstable trees: Cut as close as possible to ground level, leave stump in place and replace root plate in the existing depression.
10.	Felled or dead trees must be cut into pieces where they fall and the pieces taken away.
11.	Strim ground cover within 3 metres of the exterior of the monument.

12.	The killing or removal of well-established ivy or trees, whose root systems have invaded the fabric of masonry structure, is not permitted.
13.	Spot treatment of herbicides is permitted. All herbicides must be systemic.
14.	Any fallen masonry discovered during work must be left untouched.
15.	New shoots of woody plants which become established in the walls of the structure must be removed provided this does not damage or de-stabilise the monument.
16.	The interior of the monument must be inaccessible to livestock. Grazing by livestock throughout the year is permissible but care should be taken in the autumn and winter months to ensure no damage is caused to the monument.
17.	Place angular boulders at the base of the corner of the structure to prevent livestock from rubbing against the monument.
18.	A vegetation maintenance regime should be put in place in relation to the structure, to ensure that new vegetation does not take hold within the structure, in the absence of grazing. This should not involve any degree of ground disturbance.
19.	Monuments must be monitored regularly after clearance to prevent regeneration.

Recommendations:

In order to prevent damage to the site or monument through ground disturbance and to avoid causing a sudden loss of habitat, it is best to make a number of small interventions over a number of years rather than to do the work in one single episode. For example, berry-bearing trees are an important food source in the winter months for birds. Gorse, briars and high grasses may shelter ground-nesting birds, whilst bracken can be home to other rare plant species, invertebrates and small mammals.

In the case of bracken, the ideal method is the manual cutting and crushing of growing fronds which causes the gradual starvation of the rhizome system. Cutting or thrashing is best done around the middle of June and again six weeks later for at least three successive years.

Protection of Watercourses from Bovines

Objective:

To protect water quality by excluding bovines from watercourses.

Background:

Livestock grazing along a watercourse can lead to direct pollution of water with urine and faeces which could mean pathogens entering the water. This can destroy aquatic habitats and lower the quality of water that could potentially enter the water that humans use. Excluding bovines from watercourses will prevent the breakdown of vegetation on the banks of the watercourse. It will also prevent pollution of the watercourse from bovines

Note: Tier 1 applicants in high status water sites must select this action.

Applicants with vulnerable water status sites must select this action to become eligible as a Tier 2 (a) applicant. Watercourses on commonage and/or non-contract lands are not eligible for this action and do not have to be fenced. All watercourses are identified and marked on the GLAS online mapping system. Lakes are not eligible watercourses for this action.

Note: To be eligible for this action, participants must have had bovines on their holding in 2013 and for the duration of the GLAS contract and all grass fields contiguous to the watercourse(s) must be fenced for the duration of the contract on all parcels you are seeking GLAS payment on.

Parcel(s) chosen for the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines action must remain in grass for the period of the contract. Any tillage fields on these holdings which are contiguous to the watercourse and are converted to grass during the GLAS contract must be fenced if livestock are ever in the parcels. If a farmer comes into GLAS through an action other than High Status Water Sites or Vulnerable Status Water Sites as they don't have bovines at the time of entering GLAS; they must fence all watercourses in future years should there be bovines on the holding during the period of the GLAS contract.

Note: If the watercourse is in a designated SAC and fencing is not allowed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service this action cannot be selected as a general action.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds - Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Rare Breeds, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP and Traditional Orchards.

Requirements:

1.	Participants must have had bovines on their holding in 2013 and retain them for the duration of the GLAS contract. Bovines must be owned.
2.	Fence off watercourse(s) on GLAS contract lands.
3.	The LPIS parcels selected must be marked on the map submitted.
4.	All watercourses must be fenced a minimum of 1.5 metres from the top of the bank of the watercourse to exclude bovines by 31st December 2015.
5.	The fencing must be stockproof, fit for purpose and be undertaken with permanent stakes.
6.	Livestock drinking points are not permitted. An alternative water supply must be provided for livestock.

Note: Where the fencing of watercourses for bovines is a priority action, a derogation may be sought from Johnstown Castle not to fence the watercourse on parcels with breeding waders and/or Geese and Swans. The Derogation must be sought and approved by 31st December 2015. Where a derogation is approved, the participant will remain eligible for GLAS but will receive no payment for the fencing of watercourse action for the lengths concerned within the derogation.

Rare Breeds

Objectives:

Retain and where possible increase populations of specific rare breeds to ensure long term survival of the breeds.

Note: Priority entry is only available to those who have been registered with a relevant breed society and have registered livestock with the relevant breed society in 2012 and/or 2013.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese & Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (ABC), Catch Crops WP & PP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP & SP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection of Archaeological Monuments (Grassland), Protection of Archaeological Monuments (Tillage), Protection of Water Courses from Bovines, Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance, Traditional Hay Meadow WP & PP, Traditional Orchards and Wild Bird Cover WP & PP

Eligible livestock species:

Cattle	Horses and Ponies	Sheep
Kerry	Connemara Pony	Galway
Dexter	Irish Draught	
Irish Maol (or Moiled)	Kerry Bog Pony	

Note: The maximum number of livestock units that can be claimed for annual payment is 10.

Payment will be made in arrears based on the monthly average livestock units of owned registered animals over the previous recording year.

Livestock units for consideration for payment are calculated as follows:

Bovines 6 months to 2 years	0.6 LU
Bovines over 2 years	1.0 LU
Equines over 6 months of age	1.0 LU
Ewe (+/- Lambs at foot)	0.15 LU
Ewe Lamb (6 months - 1 year)	0.10 LU
Ram	0.15 LU

Note: The above livestock unit equivalents apply when an animal is kept for a full year.

Livestock Passports and where applicable pedigree certificates must be in participants own name.

Requirements:

Participants must:

1.	Be a member of an approved breed society for the period of the contract.
2.	Register all progeny from a purebred mating with the relevant breed society where they are seeking a GLAS rare breed payment on the animal.
3.	Maintain an up-to-date monthly record of all registered animals owned by you.
4.	Record all animals on the Rare Breeds Record Sheet.

Documents required for payment:

1.	Registration and identification certificates for each registered animal.
2.	A copy of the completed Rare Breeds Records.

Requirements for the different types of livestock:

Bovines:

1.	All females 6 months to 2 years of age will be considered for payment.
2.	An adult female(s) (over 2 years of age) must be mated to a purebred male of the same breed at each mating. Breeding females must produce registered offspring before the end of the contract, otherwise there will be full clawback
3.	All bulls 6 months to 2 years of age will be considered for payment.
4.	Bulls greater than 2 years of age up to a maximum of 1 bull per 5 cows will be considered for payment.

Equines:

1.	All equines must have a passport.
2.	All registered females and entire males between 6 months and 3 years of age will be considered for payment.
3.	An adult female (s) (over 3 years of age) must be mated to a purebred male of the same breed at each mating. Breeding females must produce registered offspring before the end of the contract, otherwise there will be full clawback.
4.	Entire adult males greater than 3 years of age up to a maximum of 1 stallion per 5 mares will be considered for payment.

Sheep:

1.	All females over 6 months of age will be considered for payment.
2.	An adult female (s) (over 1 year of age) must be mated to a purebred male of the same breed at each mating. Breeding females must produce registered offspring before the end of the contract, otherwise there will be full clawback
3.	Males under 1 year of age are not eligible for payment.
4.	Males over 1 year of age will be considered for payment up to a maximum of 1 ram per 5 adult ewes.

Further information:

For a list of Rare Breed societies – see Appendix 12.

Riparian Margins

Objectives:

Protect watercourses by creating linear buffer zones.

Background:

Our watercourses are an important natural resource that need protection from pollution and degradation. Livestock grazing in the riparian zone can lead to direct pollution of water with urine and faeces which can lead to pathogens entering the water. This can destroy aquatic habitats and lower the quality of water that could be used for human consumption. Riparian margins will stabilise riverbanks and intercept nutrients transported in overland flow.

Notes: You can only select this action if you have watercourses on your land. Watercourses on commonage land are not eligible for this action. All watercourses are identified and marked on the GLAS online mapping system. Riparian margins are only eligible in grassland parcels. Lakes are not eligible watercourses for this action.

If the watercourse is in a designated SAC and fencing is not allowed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service this action cannot be selected.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance and Traditional Orchards.

Requirements:

1.	Establish a 3, 6, 10 or 30 metre riparian margin by fencing it off by the 31 st March 2016. An access point for machinery into the margin must be kept to keep it eligible. Livestock are not permitted to graze the margin from the time of its establishment until the end of the GLAS contract.
2.	Identify the location of the riparian margin on the LPIS parcel selected and mark on the map submitted with your GLAS application.
3.	Participants can choose different Riparian Margin widths within the same LPIS parcels but

	only on different/separate field boundaries.
4.	Margin width is measured from the top of the bank or the edge of vegetation (if scrub is present) into the field.
5.	The margin must be mulched or mown at least once per year but not between 1 st March and the 15 th August each year. Offtakes are allowed.
6.	Fertilisers cannot be applied.
7.	Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds.

Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance

Objective:

To maintain and enhance the network of traditional freestanding dry stone walls, increase biodiversity and enhance the visual landscape.

Background:

Stone walls are an important feature in the landscape. Walls offer shelter to livestock, protection to wildlife and are an important habitat for both flora and fauna. Dry stone walls are walls built using stones that sit comfortably without the use of mortar and constructed in a style traditional to the locality. Where the GLAS participant is also in the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme and is in receipt of the stone wall payment, they are not eligible for this action.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Arable Grass Margins, Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Farmland Birds – Breeding Waders, Chough, Corncrake, Geese and Swans, Grey Partridge, Hen Harrier, Twite (A,B,C), Catch Crops WP, Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture WP, Minimum Tillage, Planting a Grove of Native Trees, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins, Traditional Hay Meadow WP and Traditional Orchards

Note: Stone walls entered for this action must be accessible and visible for maintenance. Walls with scrub on or against them are not eligible for payment. External farm stone walls entered for this action are payable at half rate except for external stone walls that front onto a public roadway, private laneway or waterbody where the farmer has control over both sides of the wall for maintenance. Internal wall lengths can only be counted once and must be maintained on both sides. A stone wall that bounds a farmyard is eligible for payment at the full rate provided the participant has control of both sides of the wall for maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Maintain traditional freestanding dry stone walls by replacing stones that may have fallen off the top of the wall or repair walls if/where stones have fallen down. Walls that have fallen or partly collapsed must be rebuilt in the same style as other walls in the locality. <u>Walls built with mortar are not eligible for the action.</u>
2.	The location and length (metres) must be identified on the LPIS plot(s) and marked on the map submitted.
3.	The minimum amount of stone wall for maintenance is 10 m and this must be in a single continuous length.
4.	A maximum of 4,000 metres on the holding.
5.	All walls entered for this action must be maintained from the commencement of the contract to the end of the GLAS contract.

Traditional Hay Meadow

Objective:

To promote the maintenance of a traditional method of forage conservation that is beneficial to grassland flora and fauna.

Note: Where the Traditional Hay Meadow is situated within a designated Natura 2000 site, farmers can choose to be paid for this action, rather than Natura once the parcel complies with the Traditional Hay Meadow Specification and they comply with the Natura designation.

Farmers who apply for a Nitrates Derogation in any year of the GLAS contract will be ineligible for this action. There will be clawbacks of any Traditional Hay Meadow payment made to date.

This action is separated into whole parcel (WP) and part parcel (PP)

Traditional Hay Meadow WP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Farmland Habitat (Private Natura), Laying of Hedgerows, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Protection of Archaeological Monuments (Grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Traditional Hay Meadow PP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Catch Crops PP, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture PP, Rare Breeds and Wild Bird Cover PP.

Requirements:

1.	Select a suitable Traditional Hay Meadow where the entire area of the full parcel or part parcel (see 3 below) can be mowed with a tractor mower.
2.	The maximum area payable is 10ha of Traditional Hay Meadow and/or Low Input Permanent Pasture.
3.	This action can be delivered on a full or split LPIS grassland parcel. Where the action is on a split parcel it must be digitised out and marked on the map submitted.

4.	Selected LPIS parcels must not have been cultivated in the last 8 years and must have been declared as forage on the SPS for the previous 8 years.
5.	The meadow must contain a minimum of three grass species such as cocksfoot, timothy, bentgrasses, fescues, sweet vernal, Yorkshire fog, etc. (excluding Ryegrasses) that are widely dispersed throughout the LPIS parcel. Where Ryegrasses are present, they must not occupy more than 50% of the sward.
6.	Maximum chemical nitrogen usage is 40 kg N per ha per annum.
7.	Grazing cannot take place from the 15 th April until the meadow is mown annually which must be after the 1 st July.
8.	Topping cannot take place from the 15 th March until after the meadow is mown annually.
9.	Supplementary meal feeding may take place on these parcels provided meal troughs are moved to avoid poaching. Where the parcel is a Natura parcel, the GLAS advisor and participant should ensure that the supplementary feeding of meal does not impact negatively on the Natura site.
10.	Where present, rushes must be controlled either mechanically by weed wiping and/or by spot spraying. While weed wiping and/or spot spraying can take place between 15 th March and when the meadow is mown annually, topping to control rushes cannot take place between these dates.

Recommendation: Where, because of bad weather or for other reasons, hay cannot be saved, silage can be made, provided that it is turned at least twice before collecting.

Note: In GLAS there will be no cross compensation allowed between Low Input Permanent Pasture and Traditional Hay Meadows. Therefore if a farmer commits to deliver 5 hectares of Low Input Permanent Pasture and 5 hectares of Traditional Hay Meadow, they must deliver 5 hectares of each i.e. they cannot deliver 6 hectares of Low Input Permanent Pasture and 4 hectares of Traditional Hay Meadow.

Traditional Orchards

Objective:

Increase biodiversity and provide a habitat for wildlife on the farm.

Background:

To ensure the survival of old fruit varieties and to enhance the visual and historical value of the landscape.

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Coppicing of Hedgerows, Laying of Hedgerows, Planting New Hedgerow, Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (tillage), Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (grassland), Protection of Watercourses from Bovines, Rare Breeds, Riparian Margins and Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance.

Requirements:

1.	Plant 10 fruit trees in the dormant season (October to March) before the 31 st March 2016.
2.	This action must be delivered on a full LPIS parcel. LPIS parcel selected must be marked on the map submitted.
3.	The minimum area is 0.05 ha and trees must be spaced with a radius of 7 meters apart.
4.	Choose varieties from Appendix 5.
5.	Trees must be supported with a suitable stake and secured with a suitable tie.
6.	Trees must be protected from livestock and the orchard fenced off. However, grazing with sheep is permitted provided that no damage is caused to the trees. If damage is being caused by rabbits/hares, measures to prevent further damage must be taken by the erection of a rabbit-proof fence.
7.	Failed or dead trees must be replaced during the next planting season.
8.	Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds.

Recommendation: Trees must be on their own roots or grafted onto vigorous rootstocks (MM106 or MM111)

Further information:

<http://www.mrmiddleton.com/apple>,

www.irishseedsavers.ie

Wild Bird Cover

Objective:

To sow a seed crop mix that provides a food source and winter cover for farmland birds and other fauna.

Background:

Wild Bird Cover is a spring-sown crop that is left unharvested over winter to provide food for farmland birds.

This Action is Separated into whole parcel (WP) and part parcel (PP)

Wild Bird Cover WP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes, Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes/Sand), Low Emission Slurry Spreading and Rare Breeds

Wild Bird Cover PP

If you select this action the only other actions you can select on this LPIS parcel are:

Catch Crops PP, Environmental Management of Fallow Land PP, Low Emission Slurry Spreading, Low Input Permanent Pasture PP, Rare Breeds and Traditional Hay Meadow PP

Requirements:

1.	Successfully establish a wild bird cover crop by sowing a suitable seed mix as set out below by 31 May 2016.
2.	This action can be delivered on a full or split LPIS parcel. Where the action is on a split parcel it must be digitised out and marked on the map submitted with the GLAS application. The Wild Bird Cover must remain in the same place for the duration of the GLAS contract.
3.	The minimum area is 1 ha where it is taken as a priority action and 0.25 ha where it is taken as a general action and maximum area for payment is 3 ha. The minimum parcel size is 0.25 of a hectare.
4.	Parcels selected must be capable of producing a crop.
5.	Crop must remain in situ until 15 th of March the following year. In the year in which

	parcels have been fully replanted, livestock may enter the parcel from 15 th March to planting time, to aid in the decomposition of the trash.
6.	The 1 year mix must contain a cereal (either oats or triticale) and at least one species from the following: oilseed rape, linseed and mustard. The two year mix must contain a cereal (either oats or triticale) and kale. Where the 2 year mix is sown, half the plot is sown with cereal and half the plot is sown with kale. Do not sow it in alternative strips, as the cereal must be resown in year 2 while the kale will be remaining in situ.
7.	Drilling is the preferred sowing method; however broadcasting of the seed is permitted. If broadcasting, increase the seed rates by between one third (for smaller seeds) and a half (for larger seeds), and roll immediately post sowing.
8.	Pre-sowing weed control can be used.
9.	Pesticides cannot be applied post sowing. However spot treatment with herbicide for noxious weeds and invasive species is permitted.
10.	Parcel(s) must be fenced off and stock proof from the time the crop is sown until to the 15 th of March of the following year.
11.	Fertiliser can be applied at a maximum of half rate for a cereal crop prescribed in Statutory Instrument 31 of 2014.
12.	No harvesting can take place.

Recommendations

Consideration should be given to growing the crop adjacent to cover (e.g. beside hedgerows or near woodland or scrub). This may also be grown along a stream or river where it can have the dual benefit of acting as a buffer margin.

Examples:

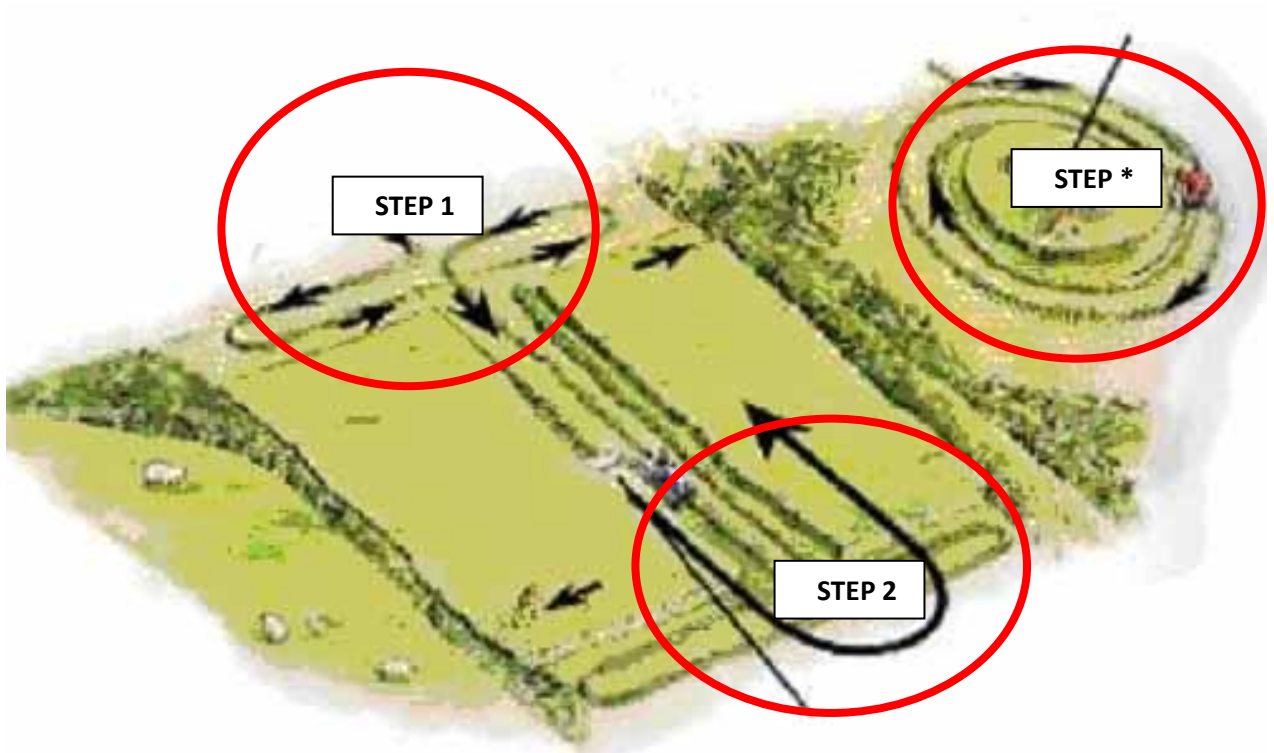
Example 1: One year seed mixes that can be planted annually – can be mixed together.

Seed mix	Seeding rate where drilled
Oats and Linseed	75 kg/ ha of oats and 15 kg/ha of linseed
Oats and Mustard	75 kg/ha of oats and 10 kg/ha of mustard
Triticale and Linseed	75 kg/ha of triticale and 15 kg/ha of linseed
Triticale and Oilseed Rape	75 kg/ha of triticale and 3 kg/ha of oilseed rape

Example 2: Two Year see mixes must be planted separately beside each other in the one plot.

Year	Seed mix	Seeding rate where drilled
Year 1	Establish half the plot with cereal crop and half with kale	75 kg/ ha of oats / triticales 3 kg/ha of kale
Year 2	Kale remains in situ and re-establish cereal crop in half of plot	75 kg/ha of oats/triticales
Year 3	Re-establish half of plot as kale and half of plot as cereal	75 kg/ha of oats/triticales 3 kg/ha of kale
Year 4	Kale remains in situ in half the plot and re-establish half of plot with cereal crop	75 kg/ha of oats/triticales
Year 5	Re-establish half as kale and half as cereal	75 kg/ha of oats/triticales 3kg/ha of kale

Appendix 1a: 'Centre Out' mowing method

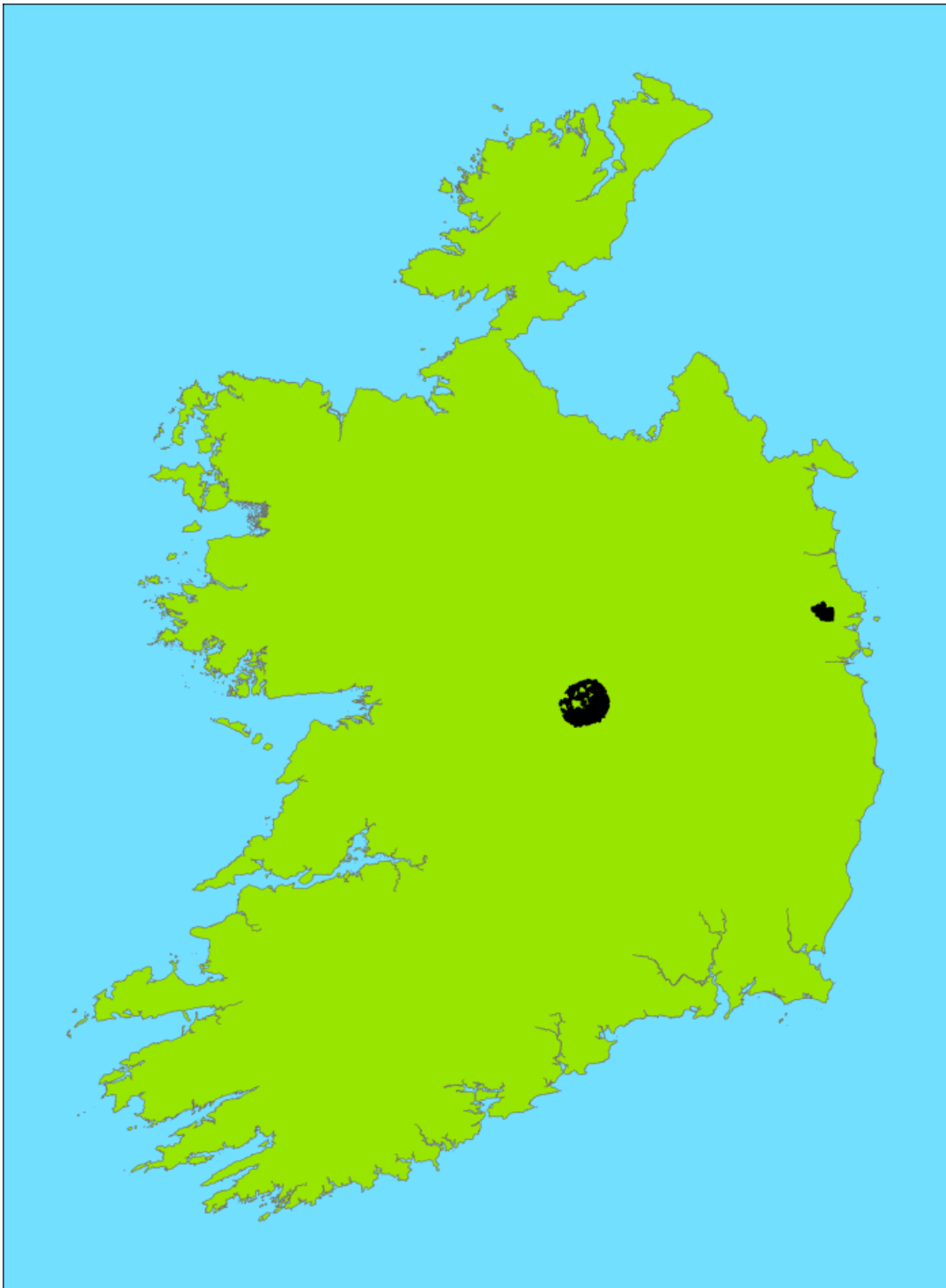


STEP 1: Mow the two ends of the field parcel.

STEP 2: Mow the remainder of the field from the centre out in a slow (low gear) manner.

STEP *: If present, mow towards rocky knoll to leave a sizeable refuge.

Appendix 1b: Grey Partridge eligible land areas



Appendix 1c: Twite eligible land areas.

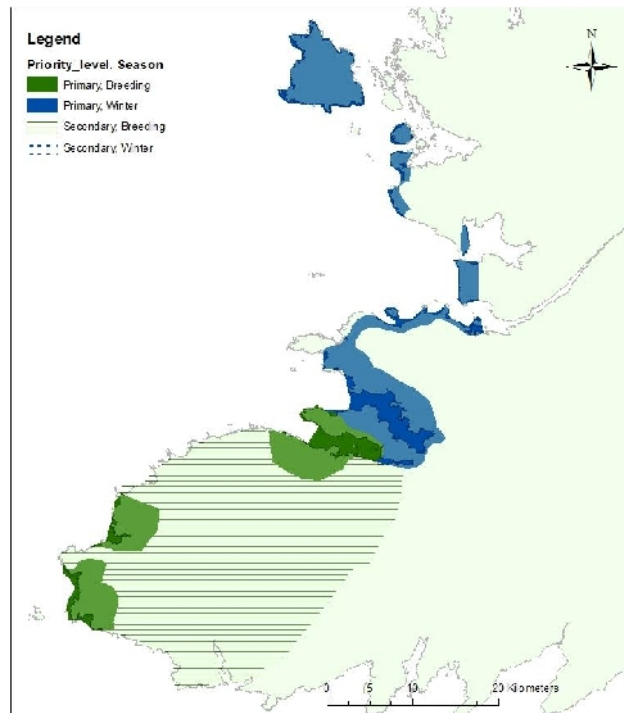


Figure 1: Primary and secondary target areas for Twite birds County Donegal

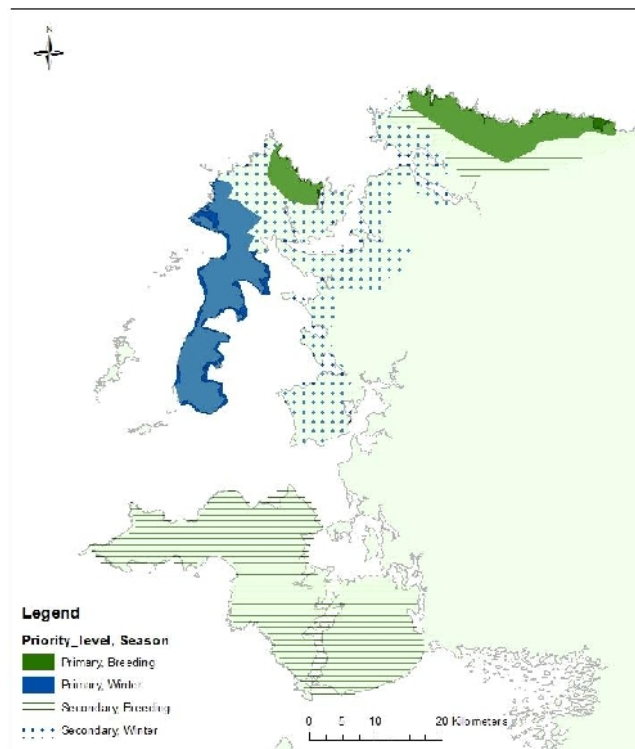


Figure 2: Primary and secondary target areas for Twite birds County Mayo.

Appendix 2: Interaction between Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) and GLAS

Arable Grass Margins	Allowed along with OFS payment
Bat Nest Boxes	Allowed along with OFS payment
Bird Nest Boxes	Allowed along with OFS payment
Conservation of Solitary Bees (Boxes)	Allowed along with OFS payment
Conservation of Solitary Bees (Sand)	Allowed along with OFS payment
Breeding Waders	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Chough	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Corncrake	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Geese and Swans	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Grey Partridge	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for the LPIS Parcel within which the Grey Partridge margin is located
Hen Harrier	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Twite A	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Twite B	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for the LPIS Parcel within which the Twite B margin is located
Twite C	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Catch Crops	Allowed along with OFS payment
Commonage Management Plan	Allowed along with OFS payment as no payment for commonage in OFS
Coppicing of Hedgerows	Allowed along with OFS payment
Environmental Management of Fallow Land	Allowed but only where OFS payment forgone for the LPIS Parcel
Farmland Habitat (Private Natura)	Allowed along with OFS payment
Laying of Hedgerows	Allowed along with OFS payment
Low Emission Slurry Spreading	Allowed along with OFS payment
Low Input Permanent Pasture	Allowed, but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Minimum Tillage	Allowed along with OFS payment
Planting a Grove of Native Trees	Allowed, but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Planting New Hedgerow	Allowed along with OFS payment
Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (Tillage Parcels)	Allowed along with OFS payment Allowed but only where OFS payment is forgone for the LPIS Parcel within which the tillage monument is located
Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments (Grassland Parcels)	Allowed along with OFS payment
Protection of Watercourses from Bovines	Allowed along with OFS payment
Rare Breeds	Allowed along with OFS payment
Riparian Margins	Allowed but only where OFS payment is forgone for the LPIS Parcel within which the riparian margin is located
Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance	Allowed along with OFS payment
Traditional Hay Meadow	Allowed, but only where OFS payment forgone for that area
Traditional Orchards	Allowed along with OFS payment
Wild Bird Cover	Allowed, but only where OFS payment forgone for that area

Appendix 3: Approved Native Hedgerow Species

Choice of Hedgerow species that **MUST** be planted in the Planting New Hedgerow Action, Coppicing of Hedgerow action and/or Laying of Hedgerow Action.

Species	Characteristics
<p>Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i></p>	<p>Grows well on heavy and sandy soils. Salt tolerant, suitable for coastal and exposed situations. Quick growing shrub, forming an impenetrable stockproof barrier when well established. Throws out root suckers requiring regular management. Excellent plant for gapping hedgerows. Stands up well to cutting. Can be propagated from rooted suckers. Tends to become bare at the base.</p>
<p>Holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i></p>	<p>Grow on clay soils, sands and gravel. Very tolerant of shade. Will not grow on wet sites. Both male and female plants are required to produce berries. Slow growing evergreen with high amenity value. Forming a tough stockproof barrier. Good plant for gapping. Susceptible to frost damage.</p>
<p>Whitethorn (Hawthorn) <i>Crataegus monogyna</i></p>	<p>Tolerant of most soils except where very wet. Does not thrive at high elevations. Susceptible to Fire Blight disease; should not be planted near tree/shrub nurseries or commercial orchards Ubiquitous native hedge plant tough, hardy and fast growing. Withstands hard cutting and lying. Displays great variation in flower hue at blossom time. An important source of pollen and nectar for invertebrates; major bee forage plant.</p>

Appendix 4: Native Irish trees for Planting a Grove of Native Trees

Species	Characteristics	Remarks
Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>)	Suitable for wet sites. Fast growing nitrogen-fixing tree. Suitable broadleaf for even the wettest sites.	Minor forest species. Common Alder is a native tree. Coppices freely and can be used in mixtures on less fertile sites. Valuable shelter tree
Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), Downy birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>)	Pioneer species suited to very acid soils and peats. Fast growing, hardy species, withstands exposure and frost well. Useful as a nurse crop in mixtures but must be kept under control or it will smother a slower growing tree species	Very attractive small tree. Minor forest species. Native tree. Young trees coppice freely. May be used as a soil improver. Can be mixed into shelterbelts
Sessile oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>), Pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	Well-aerated deep fertile loams. Will grow well on heavier soils Slow growing, long lived tree.	Major forest species. One of our few native broadleaved trees. Very high amenity and wildlife value
Mountain ash (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>)	Suitable for lowland and hill acidic sites. Will tolerate even alkaline sites Hardy tree suitable for exposed sites. Widely used amenity tree	Minor forest species. Native tree. Offers good support for wildlife
Whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>)	Most fertile mineral soils. Attractive amenity tree also suitable for shelter	Minor forest species. Native tree. Tolerant of exposed and coastal sites
Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	Fertile deep well-drained mineral soils. Preference for slightly acid soils but will do well on deep loams over limestone. Fast growing, light demanding, requiring considerable space. The only commercial broadleaved tree with attractive blossoms	Major forest species. Native tree. May suffer from bacterial canker and aphid attack

<p>Goat willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>), rusty willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i> subsp. <i>oleifolia</i>), eared willow (<i>Salix</i> <i>aurita</i>) and white willow (<i>Salix alba</i>)</p>	<p>Useful species for wet sites and streambanks. Fast growing useful for conservation and amenity but rarely for timber production. Willow can be used in a variety of ways as a shelterbelt system</p>	<p>Minor forest species. Native tree. Attractive tree when grown as a standard tree.</p>
<p>Hazel (<i>Corylus</i> <i>avellana</i>)</p>	<p>Hazel can grow as a small tree with a single stem but is more frequently found as a multi-stemmed shrub. It has high amenity and wildlife value:</p>	<p>Hazel is very suitable to coppice and lay.</p>
<p>Scots pine (<i>Pinus</i> <i>sylvestris</i>)</p>	<p>Scots pine is suited to light soils with fairly free drainage or milled peat cutaway bogs. It is a hardy species which is tolerant of frosts. It grows vigorously in its early years and can be used for amenity or timber production.</p>	<p>Forest species. Native tree. Grows well in a mixture with other species particularly oak and birch.</p>

Appendix 5: Definitive list of Native tree varieties suitable for Traditional Orchard*

Aherne Beauty	Eight Square	Martin's Seedling
Appletown Wonder	Farrell	Mrs Perry
April Queen	Finola Lee	Munster Tulip
Ard Cairn Russet	Frank's Seedling	Pêche Melba
Ballinora Pippin	Gibbon's Russet	Rawley's Seedling
Ballyfatten	Gibby's Apple	Red Brandy
Ballyvaughan Seedling	Glenstal Cooker	Reid's Seedling
Barnhill Pippin	Golden Royal	Richardson
Beauty of Ballintaylor	Greasy Pippin	Ross Nonpareil
Bloody Butcher	Green Chisel	Sam Young
Brown Crofton	Honeyball	Scarlet Crofton
Buttermilk Russet	Irish Molly	Sheep's Snout
Cabbage Stalk	Irish Peach	Sovereign
Cavan Rose	Irish Pitcher	Strippy
Cavan Strawberry	Keegan's Crab	Thompson's Apple
Cavan Sugarcane	Kemp	Turkey Willouby
Cavan wine	Kerry Pippin	Valentine
Clearheart	Kilkenny Pearmain	White Crofton
Councillor	Kiltoghert Blossom	White Moss
Davy Apple	Lady's Finger	White Russet
Dick Davies	Leitrim Red	Widow's Friend
Dockney	Leixlip	Yellow Clare
Ecklinville Seedling	Lough Tree	Yellow Pitcher

* Additional species may also be considered eligible provided the objectives of the measure are met – email glas@agriculture.gov.ie

Appendix 6: Example Provenance Declaration Form for Planting of a Grove of Native Trees

PROVENANCE DECLARATION FORM (For use with Forest Service Grant Schemes)

PART A Supplier's Document (To be completed by the Nursery/Supplier -Issued in accordance with Council Directive 1999/105/EC)

Supplier's Official Registration Number: Supplier's Document Number:

Species: Common Name: _____ Botanical Name: _____

Master Certificate of Provenance Number: _____ Country of Issue: _____

Note: The Master Certificate of Provenance Number refers to the number of the original seed Certificate of Provenance issued by a designated National Regulatory Authority.

Provenance Details: Country: _____ Provenance: _____

Origin: Indigenous Unknown If Non-Indigenous: Country: _____ Region: _____

Category: Source Identified Selected Qualified/ Untested Seed Orchard Tested Less stringent requirements/Derogation

Type of Basic Material: Seed source Stand Seed Orchard Parents of families Clone Clonal mixture

National Register Reference or identity code for region of provenance: _____

Purpose: Multifunctional forestry Other specific purposes (please indicate) _____

Length of time in nursery and production type: _____

Unique identity/batch no. assigned by the Supplier: _____ Quantity dispatched: _____ Date of Dispatch: _____

Name and Address of Purchaser: _____

Delivery Address (if different): _____

Plant Passport Details (where applicable): EU Plant Passport IRL/DAF /Registration Number: _____ PZ Code: _____

Replacement Passport Details: Country: _____ Reg. No: _____ Batch No: _____

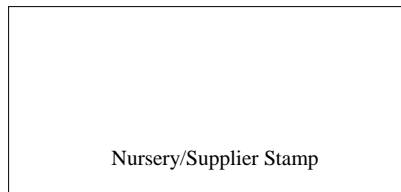
It is hereby declared that all of the above details are correct, that the origin/provenance complies with the accepted origin/provenance list in the Forest Service *Forestry Schemes Manual* and/or the *Native Woodland Scheme Manual* and that where applicable the original Supplier's document is available for inspection.

Name and address of Nursery/Supplier: _____

Authorised Person: _____

Authorised Person's signature: _____

Date: _____



PART B to be completed by the Contractor/Applicant

Contract No: _____ Applicant's Name: _____

PART A is an Original: PART A is a Photocopy:

This Provenance Declaration Form accounts for:

All of the trees planted of the above species on this contract: **Part** of the quantity planted of the above species on this contract:

If **Part** indicates the numbers planted and complete a separate Provenance Declaration Form for the remainder:

If **Part** state the Plot Number(s) applicable to this Provenance Declaration Form:

It is hereby declared that all of the above provenance details for the above contract are correct and that where the Nursery/Supplier Declaration (Part A) is a copy the original is available for inspection.

Applicant's signature: _____

OR Name of Contractor: _____

Contractor's Authorised Person: _____

Authorised Person's signature: _____

Date: _____

Contractor Stamp (where applicable)

Version: 21/2/03

Appendix 7: Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use Code (CRRU)

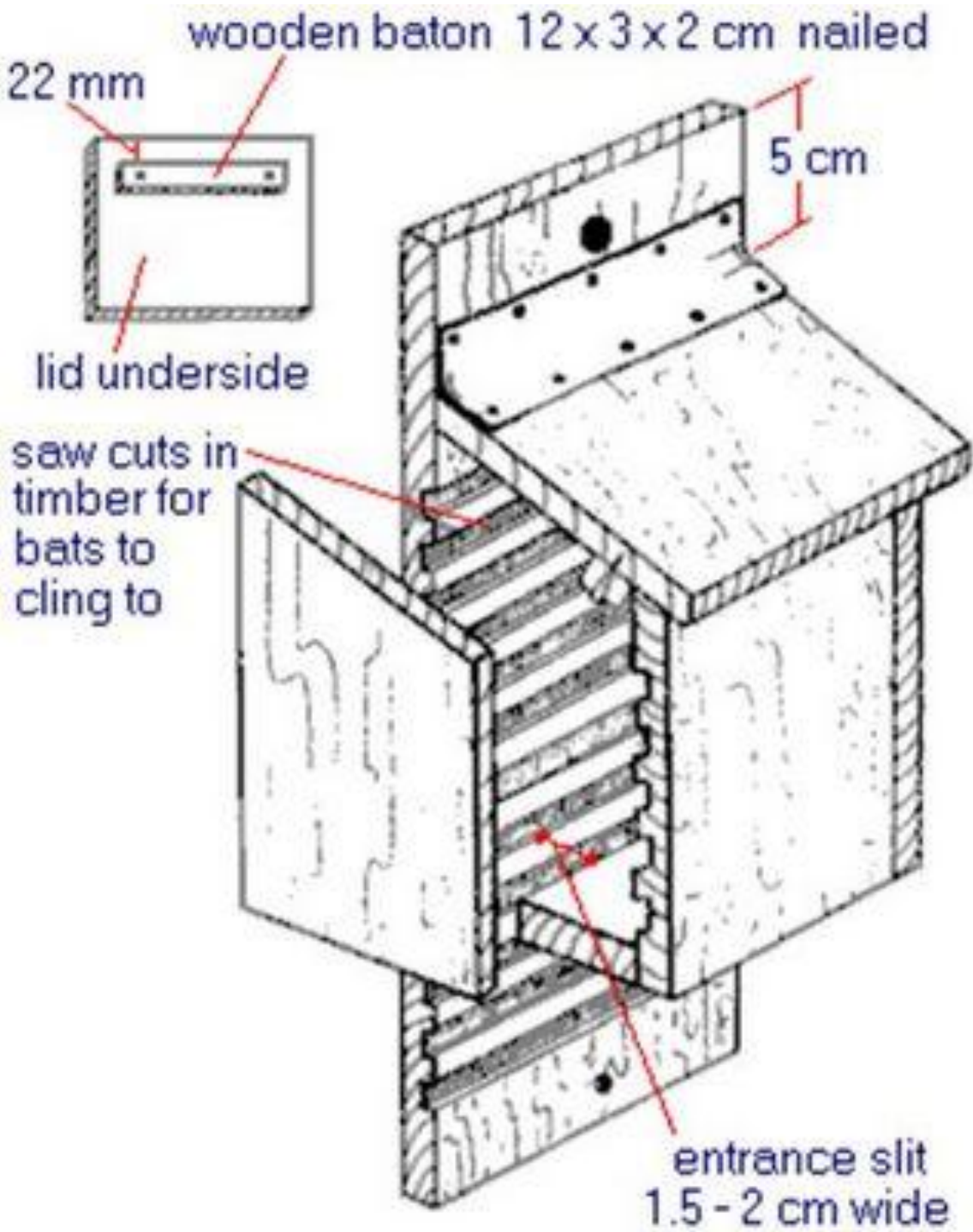
CRRU Code requirements:

1. Always have a planned approach.
2. Always record quantity of bait used & where it is placed.
3. Always use enough baiting points.
4. Always collect and dispose of rodent bodies.
5. Never leave bait exposed to non-target animals and birds.
6. Never fail to inspect bait regularly.
7. Never leave bait down at the end of the treatment.

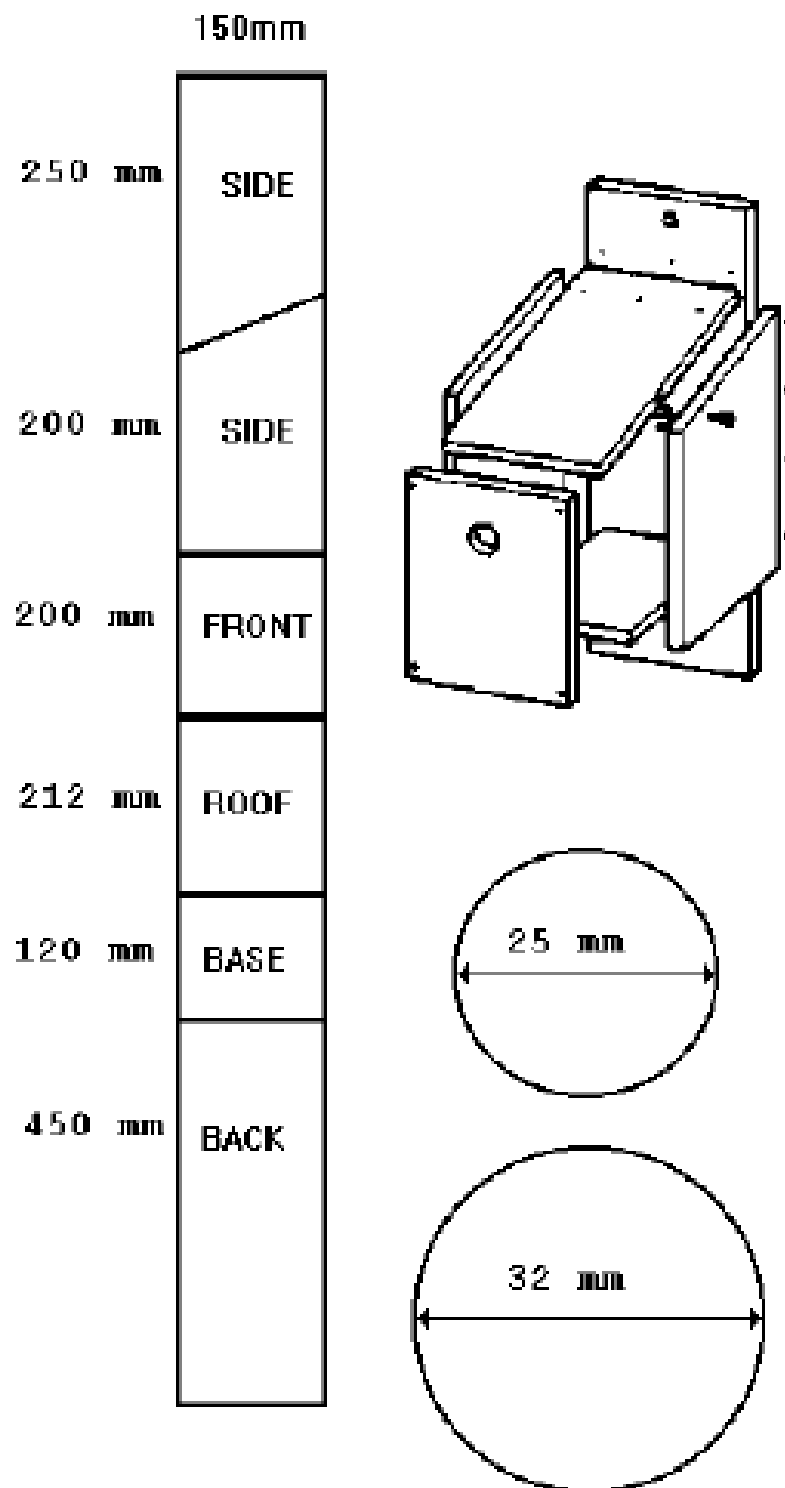
For further information:

(<http://www.thinkwildlife.org/crru-code/>)

Appendix 8: Example of Bat box dimensions



Appendix 9: Example of Bird box dimensions



Small bird nest box

Appendix 10: Example of Bee box dimensions

Dimensions: Holes in the wood should be between $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. The overall box size should be no less than 30 cm high, 30 cm wide and 20 cm deep with an overhang at the front to keep rain out.



Appendix 11: Example method of laying a hedgerow

Laying of Hedgerows

Hedgerow laying involves the part cutting through of selected stems, bending them over at an angle of 70 - 80 degrees and securing the branches and stems to stakes driven into the hedgerow bank. There are many variations of hedgerow laying.

1. A downward angled cut is made (with a billhook, axe or chainsaw) approx $\frac{3}{4}$ through the stem (experience will tell you how far to go). The stem is then laid over.
2. The heel or stub is cut off at a sloping angle near the ground to encourage regrowth from the ground but also to prevent injury to livestock and allow water run-off.
3. A long, thin tongue or hinge allows the laid stem to be twisted and positioned to best advantage.
4. Laid stems are secured to prevent them being damaged by livestock rubbing or pushing against the hedge and to prevent damage from strong winds. Cut stems are secured to posts driven into the hedge bank interwoven with suitable rods (hazel/willow) to give stability.

Appendix 12: Rare Breed Societies

Kerry Cattle Society Ltd

G.R. Hilliard (Secretary)

Cahernane,

Killarney,

Co. Kerry.

Tel: 064 6631840

email: secretary@kerrycattle.ie

web: www.kerrycattle.ie

UK Dexter Cattle Society

Mrs. Sue Archer (Secretary)

Dexter Cattle Society,

Charolais Pavilion,

Avenue M,

Stoneleigh Park,

Warwickshire.

Tel: 02476 692300

email: secretary@dextercattle.co.uk

web: www.dextercattle.co.uk

Irish Moiled Cattle Society

Ms. Gillian Steele (Secretary)

Irish Moiled Cattle Society,

'Shamrock Vale'

42 Belfast Road

Glenavy

Crumlin

Co. Antrim.

Tel: 07842 185008

Email: secretary@irishmoiledcattlesociety.com

web: www.irishmoiledcattlesociety.com

Galway Sheep Breeders

Mr. Tom Murphy (Secretary)

Shrlea,

Creagh,

Ballinasloe

Co. Galway.

Tel: 09096 44233

email: info@galwaysheep.ie

web: www.galwaysheep.ie

Connemara Pony Breeders Society

Secretary,
CPBS Offices,
The Showgrounds,
Clifden,
Co. Galway
Tel: 095-21863
email: enquiries@cpbs.ie
web: www.cpbs.ie

The Irish Horse Board

(Irish Draught Horse Breed only)
Beech House
Millennium Park
Osberstown
Naas
Co. Kildare
email: ihb@ihb.ie
web: www.irishhorseboard.com

The Kerry Bog Pony Co-Operative Society

Mary McGrath (Secretary)
The Kerry Bog Pony Co-Operative Society
Barrabehy
Mooncoin
Co. Kilkenny
email: info@kerrybogpony.ie
web: www.kerrybogpony.ie

Appendix 13: Activities Requiring Consent (ARC) List

Code	Activity description
ARC-01	Reclamation, including infilling.
ARC-02	Use of excavators, rock breakers, bulldozers, back hoes or use of any other hydraulically-powered excavation equipment.
ARC-03	Blasting, drilling, dredging or otherwise removing or disturbing rock, minerals, mud, sand, gravel or other sediment.
ARC-04	All activities relating to turf cutting and/or peat extraction.
ARC-05	Cutting, uprooting or otherwise removing plants. [Consent is not required for harvesting of cultivated crops, or for grazing or mowing.]
ARC-06	Introduction, or re-introduction, of plants or animals not found in the area. [Consent is not required for the planting of crops on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land.]
ARC-07	Removal of geological specimens including rock samples, minerals or fossils.
ARC-08	Undertaking scientific research involving the collection and removal of biological material.
ARC-09	Construction or alteration of tracks, paths, roads, bridges, culverts or access routes.
ARC-10	Construction, removal or alteration of fences, stone walls, hedgerows, banks or any field boundary other than temporary electric fencing. [Consent is not required for normal maintenance.]
ARC-11	Digging, ploughing, harrowing or otherwise disturbing soil or substrate. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 50m from a river, stream, floodplain, wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-12	Applying inorganic or organic fertiliser, including slurry and farmyard manure. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-13	Applying lime. [Consent is not required for this activity on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-14	Storage, burial, disposal or recovery of any materials. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-15	Burning, topping, clearing scrub or rough vegetation or reseeded. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-16	Modification of caves and/or their entrances.
ARC-17	Agricultural improvement of heath or bog.
ARC-18	Application of pesticides, including herbicides. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater

	than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-19	Supplementary feeding of livestock. [Consent is not required for this activity on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river or stream; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
ARC-20	Significant changes in livestock density (including introduction of grazing), changes in livestock type or grazing season, other than on established reseeded grassland. [Consent is not required for changes of less than 20% in livestock density unless notice has been given that a lower percentage is applicable to a particular site.]
ARC-21	Grazing of livestock between 1st April and 31st October on traditional winterages.
ARC-22	Changing of agricultural use from hay meadow to any other use.
ARC-23	Mowing of grass crops. [Consent is not required unless notice has been given that mowing on specified lands is likely to interfere with the breeding and reproduction of corncrakes during the period specified in the said notice.]
ARC-24	Works on, or alterations to, the banks, bed or flow of a drain, watercourse or waterbody.
ARC-25	Drainage works including digging, deepening, widening or blocking a drain, watercourse or waterbody.
ARC-26	Entry of livestock or machinery into stretches of river containing, or upstream from, freshwater pearl mussel.
ARC-27	Water abstraction, sinking of boreholes and wells.
ARC-28	Felling of trees or removing timber, including dead wood.
ARC-29	Planting of trees or multi-annual bioenergy crops.
ARC-30	Any activity intended to disturb birds, including by mechanical, air, gas, wind powered or audible means.
ARC-31	Developing or consenting to the development or operation of commercial recreational/visitor facilities or activities.
ARC-32	Off-road recreational use of mechanically propelled vehicles.
ARC-33	Using or permitting the use of land for car parking.
ARC-34	Alteration, renovation or removal of buildings, ruins or other structures.
ARC-35	Alterations or repair of sea defences or coast protection works, including cliff or landslip drainage or stabilisation measures.
ARC-36	Harvesting marine invertebrate species in intertidal areas.
ARC-37	Driving mechanically propelled vehicles in intertidal areas, except over prescribed access routes.
ARC-38	Undertaking active acoustic surveys in the marine environment.
other	Predatory control

Appendix 14: Full list of appropriate plants species for Twite B

Birdsfoot Trefoil,	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Cat's Ear,	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i>
Devil's Bit Scabious,	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Forget-me-not,	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>
Kidney Vetch,	<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>
Lady's Bedstraw,	<i>Galium vernum</i>
Lady's Smock,	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Lesser Knapweed,	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
Marsh Ragwort	<i>Senecio aquaticus</i>
Meadow Buttercup,	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Meadowsweet,	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Ox-eye Daisy,	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Purple Loosestrife,	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Ragged Robin,	<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>
Red Bartsia,	<i>Odontites vernum</i>
Red Clover,	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
Redshank,	<i>Polygonum maculosa</i>
Ribwort Plantain,	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Scented Mayweed,	<i>Matricaria recutita</i>
Selfheal,	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>
Sheep's Sorrell,	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Shepherds Purse,	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>
Smooth Hawksbit,	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>
Sorrel,	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
St. Johnswort,	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Wild Angelica,	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
Wild Valerian,	<i>Valerian officinalis</i>
Woundwort,	<i>Stachys palustris</i>
Yellow Rattle,	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>

Appendix 15: Conditions for Certain Natura Sites

Conditions for the Blanket Bogs, Heaths and Upland Grasslands

General Provisions

The primary recommendation is to avoid farming practices that cause environmental damage and all the following recommendations are designed to meet that objective. If a practice is environmentally damaging it must be stopped or modified, but the following are general guidelines and may be superseded by specific recommendations for individual farms.

Detailed Conditions

Stocking Density

In all cases an environmentally sustainable plan must be prepared and adhered to for the total area of the farm. Sustainable optimum stocking rates must be set down by the planner following careful assessment of the environmental conservation needs of the lands.

Where the stocking levels set down by the planner require a reduction in stock this must be achieved within one year of the commencement of the plan. There can be no increase in stocking levels, no introduction of stock to new areas and no changes in stock type during the period of the plan without the prior approval of NPWS. The maximum number of sheep that may be kept on the farm as a whole must be set down in the plan. The following parameters apply:

- Where there is no damage the current stocking levels are acceptable.
- If the level of damage is moderate a stocking reduction must be prescribed by the planner at a level related to the damage and sufficient for the vegetation to recover.
- If the level of damage is severe, a stocking reduction of between 70% and 100% of ewe numbers on the damaged area must be prescribed for a specified period.

At the review of the plan, the conservation status of the areas will be reviewed. A change in the stocking levels (increase or decrease) may be appropriate depending on progress.

Stocking levels apply to Scottish Blackface sheep or similar medium sized sheep breeds. Stocking levels for cattle or other stock should be at livestock unit applicable rates taking account of the conversion rates for the various stock types. The stocking levels recommended in this document

are maximum sustainable rates for year round grazing. If shorter periods of grazing are used the number of animals may be increased, though not necessarily pro rata.

Supplementary Feeding

Supplementary feeding is permitted only on areas where it is currently practised. Locations of feeding points must be specified. To reduce heavy grazing, trampling, poaching and erosion problems, “feeding points” should be moved every 3 weeks and sited on ground with least habitat and wildlife value, preferably on grassland well away from stands of heather. Feeding on steep slopes and on peaty soils should be avoided where possible. The total amount of feed used must not be increased.

Use of Fertilisers and Herbicides

Neither organic nor inorganic fertilisers nor lime can be applied on bogs, heaths or upland grasslands where they have not been used before. Fertilisers must not be used as a means of regenerating eroded areas. In the case of upland grasslands fertilisers can only be applied on the basis of the results of a soil test. Where fertilisers are being applied, the initial soil sampling should be relatively intensive with at least one sample per 2–4 ha. Target soil phosphate levels must not exceed the Index 2 level set out in this specification.

Spraying or broadcast application of herbicides must be avoided. Spot application and wipe-on treatments to eradicate docks, thistles, ragwort and similar noxious weeds may be used.

Rhododendron may be removed by cutting and herbicide treatment. Bracken control may be by rolling, cutting and/or by controlled cattle trampling in early summer. In exceptional circumstances control of bracken by herbicides may be permitted.

Water Pollution

The greatest care should be taken to observe the statutory requirements on water pollution. The hydrology of bog land areas is characterised by extremely nutrient poor surface waters, which contain flora and fauna adapted to these conditions. These species would be adversely affected by nutrient enrichment. New sheep dip sites must be listed and located away from streams and flushes to reduce the possibility of water pollution and damage to flora and fauna.

Restricted and Prohibited Practices

The following practices must not be carried out on Blanket Bogs, Heaths or Upland Grasslands:

- The areas must not be drained, ploughed, cultivated or reseeded.
- There must be no infilling or rock removal.
- Turf cutting on unexploited bogs is not permitted. Turf cutting for domestic use is permitted on existing banks.
- Planting of trees or other crops is not permitted.
- No new tracks or paths can be created.
- Burning is only allowed as a planned management practice.
- Gorse may be controlled by cutting, spot spraying or exceptionally by burning outside of the bird nesting season (March 1st to August 31st).

Conditions for the Sand Dune and Machair Areas

The primary recommendation is to avoid farming practices that cause environmental damage and all the following recommendations are designed to meet that objective. If a practice is environmentally damaging it must be stopped or modified, but the following are general guidelines and may be superseded by specific recommendations for individual farms.

Detailed Conditions for Sand Dunes and Machairs

Description

Sand Dunes and Machairs are coastal habitats consisting of hills and hollows in which unique communities of plants and animals are found in response to the very demanding nature of the dry, windy and salty environment.

Machairs are flat, level plains over lime-rich sands which have evolved in response to a unique interruption between wind, high rainfall and historical land use. They are found only in western Ireland and Scotland.

Grazing Regime

It should be noted that on sand dunes and machairs, the objective is to maintain extensive agricultural practices, and to prevent a further increase in stock numbers. Cattle stock must be kept

at the level the land can support - see also the section on Supplementary Feeding.

Cattle grazing should continue in line with traditional practices. The land should normally be grazed only in winter. However, in areas where Summer grazing has traditionally (i.e. over the previous 10 years) been practised, this can continue, provided, of course, that stock levels at all times do not exceed what the land can bear on a sustainable basis. Grazing on young and fore-dune areas should be avoided. Where conditions warrant, grazing levels must not exceed

1 Livestock Unit (LU) per hectare on a year round average and must never exceed 2 LU at any one time. This change would enable 2 LUs to be overwintered on the sand dune/machair provided it is deemed to be sustainable by the planner.

The introduction of sheep into areas where they have not been traditionally grazed should be avoided, but areas which have kept sheep traditionally can retain them, though perhaps at a lower level.

Sustainable stocking levels

The planner should set stocking levels for each farm in the farm plan. The levels should be set below the level which causes eutrophication, overgrazing, or erosion, but still high enough to control the encroachment of coarse vegetation and scrub. Where the stock level set by the planner requires a reduction, this must be achieved within 12 months of the start of the plan. Where the stock level is to increase, this can be spread over the period of the plan, as specified by the planner. Where a conservation plan has been prepared for the SAC in question, this should be used to assist in determining where damage has occurred or is occurring, where damage is moderate, and where damage has not occurred.

Official conservation plans, when available, can be obtained from the local office of the NPWS.

Supplementary feeding

The introduction of supplementary feeding can bring additional nutrients into sand dune and machair areas, and thus bring about a very fundamental change in the vegetation of these areas. The use of silage and other feed can facilitate excessive stocking levels and may lead to pollution of groundwater. Consequently, the use of any supplementary feeds in areas where it has not been customary over the last ten years may be allowed only in consultation with NPWS.

Round-baled silage can be stored in these areas. Loose silage can only be stored where an approved effluent collection system is in place and the effluent is removed from the machair/sand dune.

No supplementary feeding can take place on young and fore-dune areas.

In machair and grey dune areas where supplementary feed has been used over the last 10 years it may be continued, provided that

- The number of LUs fed does not increase
- The species of stock fed does not change
- The total amount of feed equivalent does not increase
- The amount of feed does not exceed 3.5 tonnes of silage or 0.75 tonnes of hay per LU
- No meals and concentrates are fed.

However, in exceptional circumstances, such as in unusually severe weather conditions (i.e., when there are heavy snowfalls or floods), and with the agreement of NPWS, feeding will be permitted. Weanling cattle may be fed small quantities of concentrates.

Cultivation, reseeded and pesticides

Ploughing, harrowing or any other form of cultivation must be avoided since this will destabilise the dune structure. Small traditional tillage plots on machairs may be retained. The bringing in of any seeds to these areas will disturb the vegetative balance on which the dune depends and must be avoided. The feeding of hay should only be from round feeders.

The fixed dune parts of sand dunes are essentially areas with low levels of plant nutrients in the soil and this has contributed to the development of their distinctive flora. These are also areas most used for grazing. However, the spreading of organic (slurry, FYM), or inorganic fertilisers must not take place, as the flora in these areas would be damaged.

On machairs, where fertiliser has not been applied in the past, none can be applied now. However, where low levels of phosphorus have traditionally been applied on machairs, this may continue, provided that the soils Phosphorus levels do not increase above their present levels or in any event do not exceed Soil Index 2.

Pesticides and Herbicides

All spraying or broadcast application of herbicides must be avoided, but spot application and wipe on treatment to eradicate docks, thistles and similar noxious weeds can be used.

Animal Treatments

Worm doses may be used normally, but animals, which have been given pesticides, the residues of which persist in the dung must be kept off the dune for at least a week after treatment.

Dumping and infilling

The dumping of domestic or industrial refuse, farm wastes, rubble, rock, or any similar materials which could disturb the natural environment by bringing in unsuitable nutrients or unsuitable soils and seeds must be avoided.

Farming Conditions for the Conservation of River SACs

Fertiliser in River SACs

In river SACs, no chemical fertiliser should be applied within 2 m of any watercourse.

In river SACs, the recommended buffer strip when spreading organic manures is up to 10 m from streams and drains and up to 20 m from main river channels. Where SAC boundaries have been reduced to 2.5 m, the relevant buffer is that under Cross Compliance.

Notifiable Actions

Current farming activities can continue without notification unless they involve any of the following, which, as they may impact upon habitats, are notifiable actions (that is actions which would require consultation and consent in advance):

- Reclamation, infilling or drainage (other than cleaning of drains²) within 5m of the riverbank.
- Removal of trees; reseeded of lands where this has not been practiced for 10 years or more; or afforestation.
- Ploughing or use of any pesticides where this has not been practiced for 10 years or more.
- Any use of pesticides (herbicide or insecticide) within 5 m of the riverbank.
- Intensification of current farming activity.

² Cleaning of existing drains within SACs is not a notifiable option.

- Alteration of the banks, channel, bed or flow of the river.

Ploughing

A minimum uncultivated margin from watercourses of 3 m must be maintained. This will extend to 5 metres where the SAC boundary is greater than 2.5 metres.

Prescription setting out Farming Conditions applicable to Wet Grasslands, including Callows, Wet lowland Grassland, Fens and Marshes

Grazing

Traditional³ grazing practices to be maintained. The planner shall confirm what constitutes traditional practice, which shall include the numbers and type of livestock, the species use and the seasonal grazing pattern. Sheep and/or goats are not to be introduced into areas where they have not been traditionally found. The land must not be under-grazed. Between the 10th March and the end of June a 1LU/ha stocking rate limit applies.

Supplementary Feeding

No supplementary feeding is to be introduced into areas where it was not traditionally done. Some feeding of concentrates may be permitted by agreement with National Parks and Wildlife Service in individual circumstances. Any such permission shall be written into the plan at the time such plan is prepared.

Mowing

In areas where the corncrake prescription does not apply mowing shall not be commenced before 30th June unless the land has been managed in the past that there is little diversity of plants. Any exceptions to this must be explained in the farm plan.

“Mowing” includes topping, grass chaining or rolling.

Fertilisation

Fertilising by chemical or organic means can take place in the same way, in accordance with “Good Farming Practices”, and with no intensification, only on callows that have been traditionally fertilised

³ “Traditional” means practices in use over the previous ten years

in that way.

Drainage

Maintenance of existing drains shall be permitted and no other drainage works shall be embarked upon except with the prior agreement of National Parks and Wildlife Service. Any such permission shall be written into the plan at the time such plan is prepared.

Dumping, Infilling or Burning of Vegetation

No dumping or infilling shall be allowed. Disposal of agri-waste, such as spoiled hay, is considered dumping and is prohibited. The piling and subsequent burning of waste hay is permitted on site so long as it is in accordance with normal legal provisions. The importing of materials from other sites for the purpose of burning is strictly prohibited.

Reseeding, Reclamation or Tree Planting

No reseeded, reclamation or tree planting shall be permitted except with prior agreement with National Parks and Wildlife Service and any such agreement shall be included in the plan.

Road Construction

Construction of new roads (including culverts and bridges) is permitted only with specific agreement with National Parks and Wildlife Service. Any such agreement is to be written into the plan. The maintenance of existing roadways is not restricted.

Use of Persistent Animal Treatments

Pest control chemicals, which are persistent in the animals and leave residues in animal dung for long periods shall not be applied to animals using the site. Pour-on or injectable forms are acceptable.

Use of Herbicides

Control of noxious weeds and docks is permitted by spot spraying only. The use of herbicides for the control of other species, or control by means other than spot spraying, shall be permitted only by specific agreement with National Parks and Wildlife Service and any such agreement shall form part of the plan.

Appendix 16: Details on Noxious and Invasive Species/Weeds

Noxious Weeds

A noxious weed is a plant species which has been designated by a statutory authority as one that is injurious to agriculture, horticulture, habitats/ ecosystems and humans or livestock. They are usually injurious to human or animal health. Noxious weeds can be native or introduced. A native species may not pose a threat when growing in a natural forest type situation, but becomes a problem with changing landscape; e.g. clearance to cultivation. They are usually plants, which multiply aggressively and without any natural control such as herbivores or soil or climatic conditions.

Ragwort (*Senecio Jacobea*) is also known as ragweed, buachalán and buachalán buidhe (in Ireland). Ragwort is highly toxic to cattle, horses, deer, goats, pigs and chickens. The poisonous substances in ragwort are toxic alkaloids (Jacobine, Jacodine and Jaconine). These cause the liver to accumulate copper, causing ill health and death. The poisonous material contained in ragwort is not destroyed by drying. Grass silage containing ragwort is also a serious source of poisoning. Seed is the principle method of spreading this weed, but root fragments are also capable of reproduction. Each plant produces 50,000-200,000 seeds over a 4-6 week period. Ragwort is a biennial plant, i.e. it grows from seed and remains in the rosette stage for the first growing season. In the following year it produces its familiar golden yellow flowers on a stem varying in height from 45 to 75 cm.

E.g. Ragwort, Thistle, Dock, Common Barberry, Male Wild Hop, Spring Wild Oat

Invasive Species

Invasive species are species that have been introduced (deliberately or accidentally) by humans and have a negative impact on the economy, wildlife or habitats of Ireland and Northern Ireland. After habitat loss, invasive species are the second biggest threat to biodiversity worldwide, and the biggest threat on islands.

Examples include New Zealand Bur, Sycamore, Great Maple, Daisies, Montbretia, European Rabbit, Reed Grass, Common Pitcher Plant, Canada Goldenrod, Cotoneaster, Himalayan Knotweed, Evergreen Oak, Holm Oak.

Further details on invasive species can be found at www.invasivespeciesireland.com

Townland Code	Townland
C10108	DOONEEN
C10123	SCANLANS ISLAND
C10814	RINE POINT
C13519	FEENISH ISLAND
C13521	INISHMACNAGHTAN
C13612	SAINTS ISLAND
C13613	SOD ISLAND
C14411	CRAB ISLAND
C15609	FREAGHAVALEEN
C16306	CONEY ISLAND
C16310	DOON ISLAND
C16311	ILLAUNTBEAG OR ODONNELLS ISLAND
C16313	INISHDADROUM
C16314	INISHMACOWNEY (ISLAND)
C16324	SHORE ISLAND
C16326	TRUMMER ISLAND
C16404	BERGERS ISLAND
C16410	CANON ISLAND
C16422	INISHCORKER ISLAND
C16423	INISHLOE ISLAND
C16424	INISHMURRY
C16425	INISHOUL OR OGRADYS ISLAND
C16426	INNISHTUBBRID ISLAND
C16602	BUSH ISLAND
C16605	COW ISLAND
C16610	HORSE ISLAND
C17008	MUTTON ISLAND
C19017	HOG ISLAND OR INISHBIG
C20207	BUSH ISLAND
C20213	GREEN ISLAND
C20525	ST THOMAS ISLAND
D10102	BALLYNACALLAGH
D10111	CROW ISLAND
D10114	GARINISH
D10117	ILLANE BEG
D10124	KILMICHAEL
D10129	LITTLE ISLAND
D10130	LONG ISLAND
D10138	TILICKAFINNA
D10215	REENTRUSK
D10407	BRIDAUN BEG ISLAND
D10408	BRIDAUN ISLAND
D10416	EYERIES ISLANDS
D10421	ILLAUN BWEEHEEN
D10424	INISHFARNARD (ISLAND)
D10425	KILCATHERINE
D10531	LOUGHURE ISLAND
D10638	ORTHONS ISLAND
D10752	ILLAUNGARRIFF

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D12807	CASTLE ISLAND
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E17907	BALLYBOYLE ISLAND

E18424	ROONEYS ISLAND
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G14303	CARROWNTEMPLE
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G14305	KILLEANY
G14306	KILMURVY
G14307	OGHIL
G14308	ONAGHT
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P25021	STRAKE
U10207	DERNISH ISLAND

U10211	INISHMURRAY
U10701	ARDBOLINE ISLAND
U11406	CONEY ISLAND or INISHMULCLOHY
U16425	RINROE
W10113	LITTLE ISLAND
W15713	CAMPHIRE ISLAND
Y13304	CULL
Y13435	SALTEE ISLAND LITTLE
Y13647	SIGGINSTOWN ISLAND GREAT
Y13648	SIGGINSTOWN ISLAND LITTLE
Y14219	HOPELAND
Y14220	ISLAND
Z13112	COOLDROSS LOWER
Z13913	LEABEG LOWER

Rural Development Programme 2014-2020



Ex-Ante Evaluation

Report to
Department of
Agriculture, Food
and the Marine

June 2014

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AECM	Agri-Environment and Climate Measure
AEOS	Agri-Environment Options Scheme
ANC	Areas of Natural Constraint
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEDRA	The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EEC	European Economic Community
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
ESI (Funds)	European Structural and Investment (Funds)
EU	European Union
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GLAS	Green Low-carbon Agri-environment Scheme
HNV	High Nature Value
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LAG	Local Action Group
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de L'économie Rurale
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
Mtoe	Million Tonnes of Oil Equivalent
NRN	National Rural Network
NRP	National Reform Programme
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Partnership Agreement
R&D	Research and Development
RDP	Rural Development Programme
REPS	Rural Environment Protection Scheme
RTDI	Research, Technology Development and Innovation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEC	Socio-Economic Committee
SMR	Statutory Management Requirements
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TAMS	Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme
UAA	Utilised Agricultural Area

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the Ex-Ante Evaluation of Ireland's draft Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020, the single Programme through which European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) financing will be channelled in Ireland over the period, in support of Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The report has been prepared on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), and fulfils the Department's obligations, as the proposed Managing Authority, to subject the new programme to an independent Ex-Ante Evaluation.

The requirements of the Ex-Ante Evaluation are as set out in Article 55 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), which sets the over-arching regulatory framework for European Structural and Investment (ESI) funding across the Union for the period to 2020. The CPR describes the overriding objective of ex-ante evaluations as to improve the quality of the design of each programme. A Strategic Environmental Assessment, as well as an Appropriate Assessment, have also been undertaken in parallel with the evaluation.

Ireland's draft RDP proposes some 13 specific Measures supporting agriculture and rural development, in addition to a Technical Assistance (TA) Measure. The 13 Measures are designed to support the Mission for the EAFRD under the Regulation, and its three overriding objectives, namely:

- a) fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- b) ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action;
- c) achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

The 13 Measures also seek to support a wide range of the specific Union Priorities for rural development, and the numerous Focus Areas under them, and include Measures that directly correspond to and support individual Priorities or through Measures that support a number of different Priorities through similar means and processes.

Context and Needs

The evaluation has found that the draft Programme's SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment are in general well formulated, comprehensive and thorough. The SWOT addresses strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats systematically, with due reference to matters raised in the consultation process and elsewhere. The Needs Assessment, on the other hand, is correctly structured along the lines of the RDP Priority areas (and Focus Areas within Priority areas), and is also systematic and clear in terms of needs emerging. The three European cross-cutting objectives, of environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and innovation, are also quite strongly considered in the analysis.

There is frequent and prevalent reference in the SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment to the information provided in common context indicators, and numerous references to various relevant data sources and statistics from elsewhere. The SWOT and Needs analyses are also strongly linked, and both exhibit consistency with wider

relevant policies and frameworks, including CAP Pillar 1 provisions, the national Partnership Agreement, and the Commission Position Paper on Ireland. A number of ways to further strengthen the analysis are recommended.

Programme Relevance and Coherence

The Programme's objectives, scope and Priorities intrinsically ensure it will make a significant contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy and its Union-wide and nationally-transposed targets. The three overriding objectives of the EAFRD for 2014-2020 are (a) fostering the competitiveness of agriculture, (b) ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action, and (c) achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment. While not exclusively, these predispose RDP's to support Europe 2020 objectives in the first instance in the areas of employment and climate change and energy sustainability, and Ireland's draft RDP reflects this.

The overriding Strategy within the Programme, the Priorities it will support and the Measures it will deliver, also exhibit strong consistency with key EU and national instruments beyond the Europe 2020 Strategy. In particular, there is complementarity between the Programme and the CAP Pillar 1 framework of direct payments to farmers, and there is strong alignment with the provisions of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF), and to the draft Partnership Agreement. Specific Measures and provisions will directly support the country's plans and obligations to comply with EU Habitats, Birds, Nitrates and Water Framework Directives, as well as the EU Climate Change and Renewable Energy Package,

The Programme has limited relevance to Ireland's recent Country-Specific Recommendations, the only such recommendations it has received since being supported by the joint EU/IMF programme of external financial assistance in 2010. However it also has a clear and critical role to play in supporting Food Harvest 2020, a major national strategy for agriculture and the agri-food sector, and it complements and supports many aspects of that strategy's "smart, green growth" agenda.

Two key features of the process by which the choice and combination of Measures were arrived at are highlighted in the draft Programme:

- firstly, it was determined that Measures under consideration would deliver the greatest benefit where they cut-across and addressed numerous Priorities and Focus Areas simultaneously; and
- secondly, Measures would also be optimal where they mutually supported each other and thus provided an integrated suite of interventions.

There is vertical consistency of Measure objectives with overriding EU aims and objectives for the EAFRD, and a consistency across Measures which are on the whole mutually supportive of those EU goals and complement each other in their specific goals. It is also clear that the intentional approach of addressing all EU Priorities with a range of Measures that do so in multi-faceted and integrated ways, is achieved in the intervention logic.

The evaluators are broadly supportive of the financial balance within the Programme as now stipulated. The overall balance as currently struck responds to numerous considerations:

- the finite levels of EU and national funding available;

- the need to allocate minimum levels of EAFRD funding to EAC Measures and to LEADER as regulatory requirements;
- the need to anticipate interest and uptake for different schemes and Measures that are largely demand-driven;
- the need to consider the delivery capacity for other supply-driven Schemes and Measures more;
- the need to provide for the widest levels of participation for a number of large Schemes and Measures.

While meeting the regulatory requirement to allocate very significant resources to agri-environmental Measures and those supporting ecosystems, biodiversity, water, soil and GHG emission aims, and also fulfilling minimum requirements for the funding of LEADER, the balance thereafter demonstrates a primacy given to the compensatory needs of farmers and the public good/environmental needs of farms in disadvantaged areas, and to a lesser degree the goals of supporting farm competitiveness and modernisation, and the productivity and sustainability of the beef herd. However, it will be important that flexibility to re-distribute funding as the Programme evolves is maintained and re-allocations are made where they are warranted based on progress, effectiveness and impact of Measures or the lack thereof. A critical role for the Mid-Term Review is therefore anticipated in relation to the balance of Programme resourcing based on the evidence of success to that point.

Programme Progress and Results

At an overall level the evaluators consider the quantified targets for indicators as reasonable and reflective of likely outcomes that can be anticipated in the context of the design and specification of Measures and the overall Programme as currently articulated. In many respects the target values reflect what can be anticipated given the overall Measure budget and what can reasonably be assumed regarding the order of magnitude of unit costs (or what is considered their maximum or ceiling). In these cases the target values have a simple and direct relationship with the total financial resources allocated.

Milestones and targets within the draft Performance Framework are organised according to the Union Priorities and Focus Areas. Alongside financial targets, these are largely stated in terms of outputs. All 2018 output targets appear reasonable and based on assumptions about the likely timing of Measure delivery and take-up.

The draft Programme contains an Evaluation Plan which is extensive and comprehensive, and shows a good understanding and appreciation of the requirements, and of the close links between monitoring and evaluation. As articulated, the Plan deals more clearly with aspects of monitoring than with evaluation, and gives no suggestion of what evaluations might be done and when. Evaluation recommendations are made in this regard.

Horizontal Principles and Implementation

The treatment of horizontal principles is reasonably strong. Sustainable development is deeply embedded as a principle, and is central to the Programme's overall *raison d'être*. The principles of equal opportunities and discrimination prevention receive relatively little discussion in RDP documents. While they probably did not feature notably in the consultation processes or in SWOT and Needs analyses, there is nevertheless much in the proposals that provides reassurance regarding their importance, upholding and support.

There are plans included to move to more efficient administrative systems and enhanced systems for administrative, monitoring and evaluation data capture and management. Steps are also outlined to help reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries and applicants. Similarly the critical role of advisory services is recognised, and resources allocated to ensuring their appropriateness, quality and capacity. Significant changes to the implementation of LEADER in Ireland are proposed, but recommendations are made regarding the need for greater clarity regarding these proposals.

Overall Programme Recommendations

- some additional observations on gender equality and anti-discrimination should be incorporated into the SWOT and Needs analyses, even where only to observe their degree of relevance or non-relevance, the extent to which they arose in consultations, or the degree to which they feature as specific challenges in any areas;
- some further discussion or analysis of the following should be integrated into the SWOT and Needs analyses where possible:
 - animal health and welfare;
 - the training of agricultural advisors;
 - on-farm investment specifically in the dairy sector, possibly to include data on farm borrowings and investments from the National Farm Survey;
 - farm viability in designated areas of natural constraint;
 - organic farming.
- given the importance of the issue of land mobility and the extent to which the low levels of mobility hamper structural development and growth within the sector, provision should be made for a major study to investigate the factors which influence the land market in Ireland, how it varies over time and in particular why the scale of land market activity is at such a low level. This study should inform future policy development;
- for the same reason, where possible existing Measures in the Programme should address the structural issues in agriculture wherever possible and appropriate (see Measure recommendations);
- include in the indicator plan some indicators and targets for schemes that don't yet have any (e.g. Beef Data and Genomics);
- develop a detailed and specific evaluation plan at an early stage, setting out plans for the evaluation of individual Measures, of individual themes, of progress under specific Priorities, or other dimensions of the Programme and its implementation. The plan should incorporate result and impact indicators and targets where possible, albeit outside the scope of the formal programme indicator plan and the performance framework;
- maintain financial flexibility and re-allocate where appropriate later (e.g. at Mid-term stage) based on close monitoring of the effectiveness of Measures;

- a review of the capacity and training needs of the agri-food and rural development advisory services to cope with the multiple, parallel demands of the OP as a whole should be undertaken to identify any constraints that might hamper OP implementation and actions that might need to be undertaken
- while there are various references to technical assistance in the draft RDP documentation provided, some composite statement should be made regarding of the strategic purpose to which the Technical Assistance resources will be put, and the ways in which it will support effective delivery and implementation.

Measure-Specific Recommendations

GLAS / GLAS +

- to the extent possible distinguish and favour young farmers in competitive processes where the Scheme is oversubscribed;
- monitor closely how uptake and participation is likely to support the activities required to support Ireland's compliance with obligations under the Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Nitrates Directives, and ensure there is flexibility to adjust the implementation approach where required;

Organic Farming Scheme

- establish a programme target for the percentage of national UAA under organic production that reflects the financial provisions included in the RDP for this Measure;

Locally led targeted Agri-Environment Schemes

- establish and develop the proposals for implementation structures for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel project(s), and the estimated timelines and delivery milestones for planning and implementation of all activities under this Measure;

Areas of Natural Constraint Measure (including support for island farmers)

- ensure that minimum stocking requirements apply to the whole farm in order to realise the full environmental benefits of the Scheme;

TAMS II

- ensure all indicators to be required (whether they form part of the performance framework, wider indicator plan, or evaluation plan and preparation) are established and confirmed prior to any roll out, so application details and requirements can reflect them;

BioEnergy

- additional detail should be provided in relation to the additional premium payment proposed in the Measure design process;
- further details should be provided on the basis for target setting and uptake levels anticipated given the underdeveloped market for indigenously-produced biomass;

Knowledge Transfer Groups

- discuss the requirement for only individual facilitators with the Commission, which it seems is very administratively intensive;
- ensure that topics relevant to the restructuring of agriculture are included in the agenda of the menu of potential Discussion Groups.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors

- ensure that a sufficiently broad range of disciplines to meet the needs of the Knowledge Transfer Measures is reflected in the Continued Professional Development training under the Measure, in particular softer skills, e.g. farm succession, facilitation, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- undertake a an OP wide assessment of the capacity and needs, including training needs, of the agricultural and rural development advisory services (see also under Programme Recommendations)

Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service

- improve Measure text in relation to some features, e.g. references to “training of trainers”, and vagueness in relation to monitoring and evaluation;
- sharpen the boundaries between this and other Knowledge Transfer Measures, particularly regarding training of veterinarians;
- consider removing the reference to “welfare” from the Measure title and description.

LEADER

- clarify the intended content of the social inclusion theme under LEADER and how this differs or relates to the existing social inclusion activities of local authorities on the one hand, and of the local partnership companies (the existing LAGs) on the other;
- clarify the role of the LCDC and of the LAG in relation to the economy and enterprise as there seem to be inconsistencies about this;
- document the policy desirability and the means by which access to appropriate expertise in the existing LAGs can be retained in the new RDP;
- clarify how the food Measures are to be delivered using the LEADER approach;
- establish more specific and clear objectives for the Measure to be delivered under the LEADER model;
- a detailed LEADER Measure Implementation Plan should be prepared prior to OP commencement and presented to the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The package of Regulations governing European Structural and Investment (ESI) funding over the period 2014-2020 was formally adopted in December 2013. It included Regulations relevant to all EU cohesion policy funding over the period, and importantly in the context of this report, both the Common Provision Regulation (hereafter the CPR) and the “fund-specific” Regulation concerning the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

This report presents the Ex-Ante Evaluation of Ireland’s draft Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020, the single Programme through which EAFRD Pillar 2 funding is to be channelled in Ireland over the period. It has been prepared on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), during the period January 2013 to June 2014. As under the 2007-2013 counterpart RDP, the DAFM as Managing Authority (MA) for the 2014-2020 Programme, and this report fulfils the Department’s obligations to subject the new programme to an independent Ex-Ante Evaluation.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

1.2.1 General Requirements

Article 55 of the CPR requires that Member States and regions shall carry out Ex Ante Evaluations to improve the quality of the design of each programme, that they be carried out under the responsibility of the authority responsible for the preparation of the programmes (in this case the DAFM), and that they shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the programme.

The Regulation also provides that the Ex Ante Evaluation shall incorporate, where appropriate, the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as set out in implementation Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. DAFM determined at an early stage that an SEA of the new Programme would be required and undertaken under the same contract as that of the Ex-Ante Evaluation. It also determined that the new Programme be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to consider the possible nature conservation implications of the Programme on the network of Natura 2000 sites in Ireland, and both the AA Screening and full AA were also to be undertaken under the same contract as the Ex-Ante Evaluation and SEA. SEA and AA processes have been undertaken in parallel with the ex-ante evaluation, and their reports completed accordingly.

1.2.2 Ex-Ante Evaluation Requirements

Article 55 of the CPR requires that Ex-Ante Evaluations appraise:

- *the contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, having regard to the selected thematic objectives and Priorities, taking into account national and regional needs and potential for development as well as lessons drawn from previous programming periods;*

- *the internal coherence of the proposed programme or activity and its relationship with other relevant instruments;*
- *the consistency of the allocation of budgetary resources with the objectives of the programme;*
- *the consistency of the selected thematic objectives, the Priorities and corresponding objectives of the programmes with the CSF, the Partnership Agreement and the relevant country specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and where appropriate at national level, the National Reform Programme;*
- *the relevance and clarity of the proposed programme indicators;*
- *how the expected outputs will contribute to results;*
- *whether the quantified target values for indicators are realistic, having regard to the support envisaged from the ESI Funds;*
- *the rationale for the form of support proposed;*
- *the adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity for management of the programme;*
- *the suitability of the procedures for monitoring the programme and for collecting the data necessary to carry out evaluations;*
- *the suitability of the milestones selected for the performance framework;*
- *the adequacy of planned Measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women and to prevent any discrimination, in particular as regards accessibility for persons with disabilities;*
- *the adequacy of planned Measures to promote sustainable development; and*
- *Measures planned to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.*

Guidelines on ex-ante evaluations of RDPs for the 2014-2020 period have also been prepared by the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), which provide detailed assistance to Managing Authorities and evaluators in Member States concerning the objectives and requirements of ex-ante evaluations and SEAs, along with the key stages in the process, the steps to be taken, the questions to be addressed and suggested approaches to be taken.

1.3 Methodology

Several principal methodologies have been utilised in carrying out the evaluation:

- data assembly and analysis at numerous levels including background and baseline socio-economic, agricultural and environmental data, financial data, and operational data with regard to Measures, targets and indicators;
- targeted consultations both bilaterally with selected programme-level and Measure-level stakeholders, as well as ongoing and regular consultation and interaction with DAFM;
- consideration, summarisation and synthesis of issues raised by parties invited to make submissions under both the general and SEA consultative processes;
- detailed documentary and literature review into contextual, Programmatic and Measure-level policy and programming matters; and
- periodic and comprehensive analysis, synthesis and reporting of findings.

1.4 Overview of Draft Programme

The framework within which Member States are required to design their (RDPs) is clearly set out in the Regulation, and the draft RDP for Ireland includes a set of Measures and proposals that seek to fully comply and correspond with that framework.

The draft Programme proposes to have some 13 specific Measures supporting agriculture and rural development financially-supported, in addition to a Technical Assistance Measure. The 13 Measures are designed to support the overriding Mission for the EAFRD under the Regulation, and its three overriding objectives, namely:

- a) fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- b) ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action;
- c) achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment.

The 13 Measures also seek to support a wide range of the specific Union Priorities for rural development, and the numerous Focus Areas under each of them, and include Measures that directly correspond to and support individual Priorities or through Measures that support a number of different Priorities through similar means and processes.

The proposed Measures to be included are as follows:

- Agri-Environment and Climate Measures:
 - GLAS / GLAS +;
 - Organic Farming Scheme;
 - Locally led targeted Agri-Environment Schemes;
- Areas of Natural Constraint Measure (including support for island farmers);
- On Farm Capital Investment Measures:
 - TAMS II;
 - BioEnergy;
- Knowledge Transfer Measures:
 - Knowledge Transfer Groups;
 - EIP Operational Groups;
 - Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors;
 - Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service;
- Collaborative Measures:
 - Support for Collaborative Farming;
- Targeted Support:
 - Beef Data and Genomics Programme;
- LEADER Measure;
- Technical Assistance Measure.

1.5 Ex-Ante Evaluation Process

In keeping with the requirements and relevant guidance documents, the evaluation has involved an interactive and iterative process over a period of 18 months. Features of the process have included:

- regular meetings between the Managing Authority (DAFM) and evaluators;
- the evaluators' review of written submissions made following several formal public consultation processes;
- an initial review of SWOT/Needs analysis work by the evaluators, and presentation of written feedback;
- a second review of SWOT/Needs analysis documents by the evaluators, and presentation of written feedback;
- a review of the "Situation Description" document (to form part of the SWOT), and presentation of written feedback;
- the evaluators' presence and involvement at consultation events;
- regular interaction and meetings between DAFM, the evaluators, and the authors of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA); and
- provision of feedback on other aspects of the programme.

1.6 Structure of Final Evaluation Report

In keeping with the Ex-Ante Evaluation Guidelines, the present Final Ex-Ante Evaluation Report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 addresses the SWOT analysis and Needs Assessment;
- Section 3 presents the assessment of Programme relevance and coherence;
- Section 4 considers Programme progress and results;
- Section 5 considers treatment of horizontal principles in the emerging Programme, and assesses implementation; and
- Section 6 presents overall conclusions and Ex-Ante Evaluation recommendations.

2. Context and Needs

2.1 Introduction

This Section presents the assessment of the draft RDP SWOT and Needs Assessment. A number of key features are considered, and the findings presented sequentially for each. Section 2.2 considers the completeness of the SWOT and Needs analyses, while Section 2.3 evaluates the indicator framework they utilise and adopt. Section 2.4 addresses the linkages between the SWOT and Needs analyses and the degree to which the former provides a basis and justification for the latter. Section 2.5 considers their consistency with a number of overriding policies and relevant contextual frameworks. Section 2.6 summarises how the SWOT and Needs analyses provide a basis and justification for individual Measures within the draft Programme.

As noted in the previous Section, the evaluators provided written feedback on two earlier drafts of the SWOT and Needs analyses documents under preparation, following both of which comments and recommendations were addressed by the Department. The comments in this Section therefore relate to the most recent versions provided to the evaluators (the third draft of these elements).

2.2 Completeness of SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment

The draft Programme's SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment are in general well formulated, comprehensive and thorough. As well as an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the SWOT analysis begins with the detailed overall description of the Ireland as a territory which sets the later SWOT analysis and Needs Assessment in an objective, national context. This background description covers the entire territory and at a general level confines itself to describing the demographic, socio-economic, agricultural and environmental status quo in Ireland, and in regard to some aspects, to rural Ireland more specifically. Its scope is therefore appropriate, is similar to the scope of reference covered by the common context indicator framework, and it forms a logical and important analysis to precede the more specific SWOT and Needs sections.

The SWOT analysis also (correctly) covers the territory as a whole, and summarises strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats quite systematically, with due reference to matters raised in the consultation process and elsewhere. The Needs Assessment on the other hand (and correctly so) is structured along the lines of the RDP Priority areas (and Focus Areas within Priority areas), and is also systematic and clear in terms of needs emerging. The three European cross-cutting objectives, of environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and innovation, are also quite strongly considered in the analysis.

While the scope of the analysis is commendable, and appropriate to the Programme under preparation (where it needs to refer to its general objectives and its specific Priorities, and also where it seeks to paint a wider background picture), the depth of the analysis in places could be greater. While not a general criticism, it arises more in relation to some specific types of analysis and information that would more strongly provide background and a stronger rationale for (or exploration of) the context and need for specific Measures that are to be included in the draft Programme. Section 2.6 presents findings regarding the linkages between the SWOT and Needs analyses and the Measures.

While the promotion of sustainable development runs through the documents as a central theme by virtue of the EU Priorities and Focus Areas within the Regulation, the examination of needs and disparities regarding gender equality and the prevention of discrimination, particularly relating to persons with disabilities, as the two other horizontal themes, receive relatively little focus. Some further commentary on these might be desirable, even acknowledging their non-emergence as key issues within the consultation process, as well as perhaps Ireland's position relative to the wider EU regarding female participation in agriculture and farming.

2.3 Context Indicator Framework

There is frequent and prevalent reference in the SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment to the information provided in common context indicators, most particularly in the situation description that precedes the SWOT analysis proper, which gives the material presented an objectivity and analytical basis.

In the common context indicators relevant to the "socio-economic and rural situation" and under the category "environment", there is explicit reference in the text to the majority of common context indicators, while reference is made to approximately half of those under the category of "agricultural/sectorial analysis". While there is a table listing all such indicators and their (baseline) values, examples of common context indicators not referenced in the descriptive text in the draft Programme include the following:

Socio Economic and Rural Situation:

- self-employment rate; and
- labour productivity by economic sector.

Agricultural/Sectorial Analysis:

- employment in forestry;
- employment in tourism;
- labour productivity in agriculture;
- labour productivity in forestry;
- labour productivity in the food industry;
- the farm labour force;
- gross fixed capital formation in agriculture; and
- tourism infrastructure (bed places in collective establishments).

Environmental:

- potential surpluses of nitrogen and phosphorous on agricultural land;
- soil organic matter in arable land; and
- energy use in agriculture and food industry.

As well as strong utilisation of common context indicators and data, the draft SWOT and Needs analyses draw commendably on a various data sources and statistics from elsewhere. These include data relating to agricultural output, value-added and export growth; family farm income levels; water quality data by water course type;

energy requirements and consumption; and sources of energy demand; at risk of poverty rates; and habitat status data (as per National Biodiversity Plan).

Additional data and indicators that might support the analysis further or provide baseline context relevant to Programme effects and monitoring more widely include the following:

From the Teagasc National Farm Survey:

- farm production costs as a proportion of gross output;
- the percentage of farms with off farm employment;
- farm investment and borrowings;
- farm labour productivity (income per labour unit).

From the Central Statistics Office (CSO):

- the sectoral breakdown of other rural employment;
- the youth unemployment rate in rural areas;
- households with computer connected to internet in rural areas; and
- personal computer usage in rural areas.

2.4 Linkages

In general the draft Situation Description, SWOT analysis and Needs Assessment are strongly linked. The scope of the Situation Description is appropriate and covers most or all areas considered in the SWOT, even if not at the same level of detail. The SWOT in turn explores issues in greater detail as well as their status as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. While doing so it also increases the analytical focus on the EAFRD overarching aims, Priorities and Focus Areas, and appropriately so. The Needs Assessment then carries the preceding analysis forward into specific needs and intervention proposals, although without going too far in the direction of intervention design and detailed specification. It does this, correctly, according to each of the 6 Priorities. Throughout the three stages, many themes and issues feature in all three stages, and most feature in at least two of the three stages. Few therefore are considered at only one of the three stages, without mention or consideration in either or both of the others. All of this serves to convey strong analytical linkages throughout.

There is nonetheless a number of specific issues and topics that emerge that might benefit from some further mention and discussion at various points within the Situation Description and/or SWOT, to better substantiate their emergence as specific needs, or the nature of the specific need as it is described. These include animal health and welfare, the training of agricultural advisors, on-farm investment specifically in the dairy sector, farm viability in areas of natural constraint, and organic farming.

2.5 Consistency

Commission Position Paper on Ireland

Parts 1 and 2 of the Commission Position Paper on Ireland describe what are considered the main challenges for the country, as well as what are considered the Priorities for ESI funding. Three overriding challenges are identified:

- high levels of overall and youth unemployment, increasingly long-term in nature, and the increasing risk of social exclusion;
- insufficient commercialisation of basic research and low availability of finance for the private sector, particularly for SMEs; and
- the inefficient use of resources.

The third challenge is most relevant to the RDP. However the first challenge also has relevance, particularly in regard to Priority 6 (LEADER). In relation to this challenge, the Position Paper states:

“The biggest challenges that Ireland is facing relate to increasing levels of long-term unemployment and high youth unemployment....Although the gender gaps are narrowing, the employment rate of women is still low....There is also further need for accompanying structural changes in agriculture and fisheries and to foster economic diversification of rural and fisheries-dependent areas”.

The Paper makes a number of clear statements of note regarding the third main challenge (the inefficient use of resources):

“Major challenges exist in terms of the sustainable use of resources, particularly in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, water, biodiversity, air, soil and marine resources especially when taking into account the threat of climate change.”

“Ireland needs to focus on achieving further progress in terms of share of renewable energy (in particular marine, wind and biomass energy) in overall energy consumption”

“GHG emissions from agriculture are 29.1% of the total – the highest share among EU Member States.”

“Ireland’s water quality compares well with that of most other EU countries but diffuse pollution by nitrates, phosphorus and pesticides is significant in all the river basins.”

“Natura 2000 sites in Ireland correspond to 13% of the country’s area. All of the grassland, forest and heath and scrub habitats in Ireland have an unfavourable conservation status. Agriculture and forestry are considered to represent the most significant pressure on the conservation status of these habitat types. Considerable effort will be needed to meet the targets defined in the EU Biodiversity Strategy”.

“The share of renewable energy sources (in particular marine and wind energy and biomass energy) in the Irish energy mix should be increased. CSF Funds should assist the development and, where possible, the deployment of innovative technologies and equipment leading to the production of renewable energy, including marine, wind and biomass energies”.

“This type of investment will create quality employment particularly in the construction industry and innovative enterprises, especially in rural and coastal areas.”

“Resource-efficiency needs to be reinforced by the promotion of sustainable management of natural resources, in particular through Measures designed to improve the quality of water in Ireland (especially with regard to a reduced use of fertilizers and pesticides), restoration, preservation and enhancement of

biodiversity (including in Natura 2000 and high nature value areas), sustainable land and soil management, reduction of air pollution, flood prevention and sustainable management of coastal zones.”

The Commission’s overriding Priority of tackling unemployment is reflected in the needs identified under Priority 6 for the RDP, which summarises its challenge as ensuring that “rural areas do not fall behind urban areas with regard to economic development and social inclusion”, and describes particular needs as supporting enterprise development and job creation.

The RDP SWOT and Needs analyses under Priorities 1 to 5 are more relevant to (and consistent with) the Commission’s comments regarding the efficient use of resources. Renewable energy, energy efficiency, water, biodiversity, air, and soil each emerge in the RDP needs analysis and emerge as Priorities for intervention in the Programme, as clearly is agriculture’s role in meeting GHG emission targets. There is no inconsistency therefore between what the Commission identifies as resource-efficiency Priorities and the Priorities that emerge from the RDP SWOT and Needs analyses.

Partnership Agreement

Ireland’s draft Partnership Agreement (PA) was submitted to the Commission in April 2014. Section 1.1 of the draft document is titled “Analysis of disparities, development needs, and growth potentials”. It contains little statistical profiling, SWOT analysis or Needs Assessment material that is both closely relevant to the RDP preparatory process and additional to the content of the present versions of the RDP’s SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment.

Given its much wider scope than the RDP, the PA presents greater detail on the macro-economic context, including the recent macro performance of the Irish economy, the fiscal position, the process of existing the EU/IMF Programme of external financial support, and the National Reform Programme (NRP). It presents descriptive analysis of the position of agriculture and agri-food which corresponds very closely (although in less depth) with the analysis contained in the RDP SWOT and Needs assessments, and refers to the country’s major environmental and sustainable development challenges and Priorities. A further section of the PA analysis covers “Development Needs and Growth Potential” and the material is structured under headings that correspond to the main ESI funds. Its text under EARDF corresponds closely (effectively directly) to what was then a draft consultation document on RDP Measures issued by the DAFM in January 2014, and sets out emerging aspects of needs and challenges under each of the six Rural Development Priority areas. This reflected the close co-ordination between PA preparation and individual Operational Programme (including RDP) preparation, one outcome of which is that no discernible differences or inconsistencies are apparent between needs expressed in the PA and those presented in the RDP.

CAP Pillar 1

There are numerous references to Pillar 1 supports in the RDP SWOT and Needs analyses, and a strongly evident awareness of their co-existence and relationship with those proposed under Pillar 2. For example there is linkages referenced between the Pillar 1 supports and those of past supports under the Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) scheme and its predecessors, while there is cognisance of the specific supports for young farmers to be provided under Pillar 1, and the implications of this for Pillar 2 needs and Priorities. Most

importantly however there is a clear understanding of the greening requirements that will form part of Pillar 1 requirements and how these complement but also provide a platform from which further environmental and sustainable agricultural practices and processes are Priorities for interventions under Pillar 2.

2.6 SWOT, Needs Analysis and Programme Measures

Table 2.1 provides an assessment of the draft SWOT and Needs analyses and other Programme text from the point of view of individual Measures to be included in the RDP, including the degree to which they provide a rationale and basis for the latter's inclusion.

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES

GLAS/GLAS+	<p>The GLAS/GLAS+ proposals arise in response to both identified needs and the Regulatory obligation to commit at least 30% of resources to Measures relating to agri-environment and climate change objectives. The Measure is well-founded in the SWOT and Needs analyses. The SWOT notes the levels of agricultural land under NATURA designation under both the Birds and Habitats Directives, and describes the recognised national Priority to have agriculture play its part in supporting the country's obligations to meet international environmental targets, including those in respect of water, air quality and GHG emissions. Agriculture's role as the single largest contributor to GHG emissions (in terms of CO2 equivalent emissions) is specifically noted, as is the key challenge of "increasing the carbon efficiency of agriculture". The protection of the country's "Green" reputation is repeatedly pointed to as a Priority, as is promoting activity that builds upon the most sustainable features of Irish agriculture (including for example High Nature Value (HNV) farmed land, rich biodiversity and the carbon-sink properties of blanket bog). Sectoral weaknesses explicitly highlighted include biodiversity loss, the incomplete establishment of HNV farming as a concept, poor water quality in sensitive areas, non-decreasing nitrate levels, high levels of ammonia emissions, and low levels of organic production. Greening requirements under Pillar 1 are seen as presenting an opportunity to deliver more targeted environmental Measures under Pillar 2, while on the other hand increased production, increased farming intensities and specialisation all have the potential to threaten environmental objectives, while the threat to biodiversity represented by land abandonment (resulting for example from an aging farming workforce or through the non-viability of farms), is also correctly identified. In relation to Priorities 4 and 5 in particular, the Needs Analysis confirms the requirement to implement "well-designed, targeted, monitored and managed" agri-environment Measures, including an effective agri-environment and climate Measure (AECM) "with emphasis on general agri-environmental challenges as well as more specific biodiversity issues", and at a more detailed level the need for possibly tiered approaches is identified, as is the need for more tailored approaches to species and habitat protection, the protection of high status waters and waters in sensitive areas, and the need for Measures improving soil quality and management.</p>
Organic Farming Scheme	<p>The SWOT analysis notes the limited extent of organic production in Ireland, where 1% of utilised agricultural areas (UAA) land was in organic production in 2012 (compared with 3.7% for the EU 27). This weak existing position exists despite the national target of 5% which is also noted in the SWOT analysis (a target that was established firstly in 2007 but was since endorsed in Food Harvest 2020). The demand for niche quality food products is recognised as an opportunity however and organically-produced food is highlighted as a specific opportunity in this regard. More detailed analysis of the rationale for (and appropriate nature of) RDP support for organic production is limited however, although there is cross-reference made to its endorsement within Food Harvest 2020, and more general reference made to the supports needed for a range of supply-chain issues for small food producers (which would include many organic farmers). Also noted is feedback from consultation processes where stakeholders put forward the strong view that the existence of the preceding schemes have been directly responsible for the conversion of existing organic producers, and without that past support even the relatively low existing levels of production would not have been reached.</p>

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES	
Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri- Environment Schemes	<p>As above, the rationale for a general agri-environment and climate scheme is well-founded in the SWOT and Needs analyses, and in particular the need to adopt targeted approaches, “with emphasis on general agri-environmental challenges as well as more specific biodiversity issues”. There is a recognition that specific environmental and biodiversity challenges manifest themselves in unique, specific contexts, or have unique and specific sets of remedies and mitigation approaches required, and this was a very evident theme and point repeatedly made in Programme preparatory consultation processes. As well as offering more tailored and comprehensive responses to specific challenges, fostering output-based and locally-led AEC schemes offers scope to learn new lessons regarding delivery mechanisms, monitoring approaches and financial aspects for the benefit of all future schemes.</p>
Areas of Natural Constraint	<p>The need for this Community-wide Measure has been long established. The Measure was introduced under EEC Council Directive 268/753. It was then stated that steps should be taken to “ensure the continued conservation of the countryside in mountain areas and in certain other less-favoured areas”. It highlighted the fact that farmers in such areas were subject to permanent natural handicaps and were prevented consequently from achieving a “level of income similar to that enjoyed by farms of a comparable type in other regions” and asserted that the decline in agricultural incomes compared with other regions and the poor working conditions would lead to land abandonment and would “jeopardize the viability and continued habitation” of the areas. To prevent this, the Directive introduced a “special system of aids to assist the less-favoured farming areas” and set out its objectives in Article 1 as being “to ensure the continuation of farming, thereby maintaining a minimum population level or conserving the countryside in certain less-favoured areas” and “to encourage farming and to raise farm incomes in these areas”.</p> <p>The support provided under the Measure has an important positive impact on family farm income and also on farm viability and the competitiveness of agriculture. The consultation process also showed major support for the scheme and is strongly promoted in the needs analysis where its environmental and social benefits are also noted.</p>

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES	
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II	<p>An important aspect of the background context relevant to this Measure, which is discussed in the SWOT and Needs Analyses, is the unprecedented economic crisis that began in the country in 2008, and its more pronounced negative effects in rural areas. It also notes the structural changes within agriculture, including fewer and larger farms, lower employment, and increasing specialisation and concentration of production. Variation in the viability of Irish farms is also noted, with dairy and tillage farms tending in general terms to be more viable than sheep and cattle farms. A weak age structure is also highlighted, with more than half of all farmers aged over 55 years in 2010. Strengths associated with Irish agriculture include the grassland system which allows cattle to graze predominantly outdoors, which is more environmentally sustainable than indoor housing with lower associated ammonia and GHG emissions. Irish farming is also less water intensive than in other countries. However important weaknesses include low levels of farm viability, a reliance on payments and subsidies, inefficiencies (particularly on small farms), a poor age structure, low levels of land mobility and a low take-up of technology and best practices in some sectors. Threats include rising input costs which may further undermine viability and competitiveness, and high dependence on imported inputs, as well as environmental degradation, climate change and the need for improved environmental practices. The Needs Analysis points to a number of specific areas requiring on-farm investment, including the dairy industry and dairy equipment given the sector's likely expansion following the ending of the milk quota, and also equipment and assets for the storage of farm nutrients (soiled water, slurry, etc). Low emissions spreading technology is also an area of potential investment demand, as is facilities for improved animal handling, safety and welfare.</p> <p>Reference to data from the National Farm Survey regarding farm borrowing and investment would improve the analysis however.</p>
BioEnergy Scheme	<p>The justification for this Measure is well argued in the SWOT and Needs analyses and there have been acknowledged difficulties in getting bioenergy established in Ireland, in part owing to the high establishment costs. It is also acknowledged that there is a lack of market development for the bioenergy sector including organisation of the supply chain for bioenergy production and the need to better join up supply and demand. As has been pointed out also there is the added advantage of import substitution and increasing incomes and employment in rural areas. There still remains a concern however that there might not be sufficient capacity to utilise bioenergy crop production.</p>

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES	
Knowledge Transfer Groups	<p>The Knowledge Transfer Groups Measure is one of three Measures under the overall theme of Knowledge Transfer. The need for the intervention is developed in the Needs Analysis. Under “Education, Research and Knowledge Transfer” this recognises the strength of the Irish education and research sector, but notes that there is recognition that improvements are needed in terms of “applying this research and strengthening its links to innovation”. The centrality of human capacity development in the agriculture and food sectors have also been highlighted in a series of previous analyses, including the Food Harvest 2020. The consultation undertaken as part of the OP preparation also highlighted the importance of the area. It could, however, be observed that more structured training needs analyses might, with hindsight, have been undertaken to further confirm the appropriateness of the general approach and of the areas being targeted. While the Measure is not a direct successor of previously operated discussion groups, the experience of those groups does demonstrate the overall appropriateness of the model being proposed.</p>
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups	<p>In the RDP Needs Analysis and SWOT, it was highlighted that Ireland has a well-established and high-quality agri, food and rural development public research and development support system. There are also well developed inter and intra institutional collaboration fora and mechanisms, particularly in the Research, Technology Development and Innovation (RTDI) field. However, a significant challenge remains in addressing the difficulties in transferring the knowledge and the translation of research results to end-users. Greater linkage between research and on-farm and other local-level implementation needs to be established. Support under the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) model has therefore been highlighted as an appropriate vehicle to help address this particular need given the emphasis on the dissemination of findings and results. It is therefore anticipated in the OP that the EIP model will help fill the current gap between farmers, rural enterprises and advisors on the one hand, and the science and innovation system on the other. It will help improve co-ordination and bring together all relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels in order to both set up research and development efforts and to mobilise demand in particular through better co-ordinated public procurement to ensure that any breakthroughs are quickly brought to market.</p>
Continued Professional Development for Advisors	<p>The general requirement across the RDP for improved human resource capacity and Knowledge Transfer is clearly set out in the Needs Analysis. However, it is arguable as to whether the skills gaps among the advisors have been as clearly identified as might be expected, e.g. in terms of formal training needs analysis. However, it is probably a reasonable presumption that since advisors would be involved in a range of new or upgraded activities that they will require training in this regard.</p> <p>In addition, there is a clear multiplier effect from the upgrading of trainer skills as these will then be passed on to trainees across the sector.</p>

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES	
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	<p>The need for the Measure is well based, although it is arguably not particularly clearly articulated in the Needs Analysis and SWOT.</p> <p>Essentially the Measure will support a national effort to address a series of so called “production” or non-regulated animal diseases, as distinct from regulated diseases. The core difference between the two types of animal disease is that the latter present a risk to human health, whereas the former present relatively little or no risk to human health but have significant consequences for individual processors. Consequently, regulated diseases tend to be dealt with via government-led national programmes such as TB eradication whereas the latter tend to involve joint public private approaches.</p> <p>Food Harvest 2020 identifies animal health as one of the areas that will contribute to on-farm competitiveness since their eradication reduces production costs. It can in some instances also reduce the risk of being excluded from overseas markets where individual countries may for a variety of reasons introduce bans on product above certain levels of contamination.</p>
Support for Collaborative Farming	<p>The structural problems facing Irish agriculture are outlined in the SWOT analysis. Restructuring did slow down appreciably in the last intercensal decade. Land renting is another major structural feature of Irish farming, while farm fragmentation has increased noticeably. Another quite disturbing feature is the deterioration in the age structure of landholders. Facilitating entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and in particular generational renewal was perceived as a need and accordingly one of the Measures included in the RDP to address this Focus Area is the Collaborative Farming Measure. The analysis states that an effective ladder of opportunity for trained young people to enter into and progress in farming which will result in an improved age profile of farmers is a clear challenge for the sector which was clearly demonstrated in the public consultation process and in the SWOT analysis, and the availability of land through inter-generational farm transfer is crucial to this need. However while it is stated that broader cultural and socio-economic issues such as the long-standing Irish historical attitudes towards land ownership are central here and these are beyond the scope of the RDP, they perhaps deserve greater attention.</p>

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES	
Beef Data and Genomics Programme	The rationale for inclusion of this Measure in the RDP is extensively covered in the SWOT and Needs analyses. The long-term FH2020 strategy for the development of the sector envisages a 20% increase in output value by 2020, but the need to do so while addressing the GHG emission aims and national policy targets. The analysis states that this goal is based on a consensus among stakeholders that future growth in the sector can best be achieved by improving output efficiency, quality and sustainability rather than simply increasing numbers. However the beef sector, in particular, continues to experience low profitability, viability challenges and an over reliance on direct payments and subsidies. Amongst some beef farmers there is a very low take-up of breeding technology and best practices which could contribute to greater efficiency at farm level. The outcome from the SWOT and the public consultation process also demonstrates an overall need to address resource efficiency to reduce emissions. A particular sectoral competitiveness challenge was identified in the SWOT and needs analyses in the beef sector, and the Beef Data and Genomics Measure will support the introduction of innovative practices in the suckler herd which will address GHG aims and underpin greater competitiveness on an ongoing basis. The Measure has also been designed with a focus on lowering emissions via support for increases in herd quality and efficiency. Teagasc have identified the establishment of an Economic Breeding Index and support for weight gain in beef as being the most cost-efficient climate change Measures and these two elements are central to the design of the Measure.
LEADER	The need for and appropriateness of a LEADER-type intervention is both reflected in the Needs Analysis and SWOT, and of course is also a regulatory requirement in the new funding round 2014-2020. The specific themes identified for LEADER support are also based on the Needs Analysis and SWOT, i.e. rural tourism, enterprise development, broadband, rural towns, social inclusion and rural environment. They are however more identified than justified. They are also reflected in the CEDRA Report which has also informed their selection and which, like the Operational Programme, was itself the subject of a detailed consultation process. Furthermore a dedicated LEADER consultation process also supports these substantive interventions. The bottom-up nature of LEADER of course means that the precise configuration of Sub-Measures supported in a particular area will be based on a Local Development Strategy (LDS) prepared in advance of the local LEADER Programme being developed.
Artisan Food Co-operation (LEADER Delivery)	There are many references to the importance of the artisan food sector in the public consultation and SWOT analysis where a broad need for support for the organisation of artisan and small scale food production was demonstrated. Food Harvest 2020 also identified the need for improved marketing of local food and uptake of EU quality systems. There are references to a number of challenges which underlie the need for intervention in this areas, including entry barriers, the need for shared understanding, skills/training, marketing and business skills deficits, but the scale of the sector or its potential have not been clearly quantified.

TABLE 2.1 ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND INDIVIDUAL MEASURES

Quality Schemes (LEADER Delivery)	There are many references to the importance of producer groups and organisations in the public consultation and SWOT analysis where a broad need for support for such groups was demonstrated. Quality assurance schemes were featured in the SWOT analysis and the benefits of collaborative approaches to particular issues is a theme in the Regulation. The Measure description also notes that there are challenges for primary producers in integrating themselves into the agri-food chain, attracting a price premium and adding value to agricultural products. This proposed Measure will aim to address such challenges, however the scale of the sector or its potential have not been clearly quantified.
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3. Programme Relevance and Coherence

3.1 Introduction

This Section presents the evaluation of a range of requirements which together address the draft Programme's relevance and coherence. It begins with an assessment of its contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy, while Section 3.2 considers the Programme's consistency with a number of relevant national and EU policies and instruments. Following that, Section 3.3 considers the Programme intervention logic, while Sections 3.5 to 3.7 address the issues of forms of support, the contribution of Measures to achieving targets, and the consistency of budgetary allocations respectively. Sections 3.8 and 3.9 present the assessment of proposals for the National Rural Network and Technical Assistance respectively.

3.2 Contribution to Europe 2020 Strategy

3.2.1 Programme Contribution

The Europe 2020 Strategy sets out a vision of Europe for the 21st Century based on the three mutually reinforcing Priorities of:

- smart growth – developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- sustainable growth – promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy;
- inclusive growth – fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The key targets under the Strategy for the Union as a whole are as follows:

1. *Employment:*
 - 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed;
2. *R&D*
 - 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D;
3. *Climate change and energy sustainability:*
 - greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990;
 - 20% of energy from renewables;
 - 20% increase in energy efficiency;
4. *Education:*
 - reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%;
 - at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education;
5. *Fighting poverty and social exclusion:*
 - at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The Union's targets are transposed into targets for individual Member States, of which Ireland's are as follows:

- Employment Rate: 69-71%;
- R&D as % GDP: approx. 2% (2.5% GNP);
- CO² Emission Reduction Target: -20%;
- Renewable Energy: 16%;
- Energy efficiency – reduction of energy consumption in Mtoe: 2.75;
- Early school leaving in %: 8%;
- Tertiary education in %: 60%;
- Reduction of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion in number of persons: 186,000 by 2016.

Actions and policies supporting the pursuit and achievement of these targets are the subject of the National Reform Programme (NRP), and Ireland's Partnership Agreement describes the main features of the NRP under each target area, and illustrates how Europe 2020 targeting has influenced the response to Union thematic objectives and the determination of national funding Priorities selected across all ESI funds. The Partnership Agreement summarises what are considered the ESI thematic objectives most supported by the EAFRD (RDP) proposals, as well as the Europe 2020 targets that justify the selection of those thematic objectives.

The specific contribution of the RDP to Europe 2020 targets is intrinsically linked to the objectives, and more importantly, Priorities and Focus Areas set out for the EAFRD in its Regulation. The three overriding objectives of the EAFRD for 2014-2020 are (a) fostering the competitiveness of agriculture, (b) ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action, and (c) achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment. While not exclusively, these predispose RDP's to support Europe 2020 objectives in the first instance in the areas of employment and climate change and energy sustainability, and Ireland's proposed Programme will reflect this.

The Union Priorities for Rural Development, and their associated Focus Areas within the Regulation further align potential EAFRD support with the Europe 2020 most notably employment and climate/energy goals, although R&D and innovation is clearly supported under the first Priority (relating to Knowledge Transfer and innovation in agriculture) while poverty and social inclusion has the potential to be supported under Priority 6 (which focuses on promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas). However there are some issues around the precise nature of this support and how it is to be differentiated from other similar local interventions in the same developmental space.

3.2.2 Measure Contribution

The Measures Ireland intends supporting under its RDP cover all Priority Areas, and many address several of them. At a general level therefore, Ireland's strategy for the EAFRD and choice and selection of Measures mean its RDP will (at a minimum) have the potential to address Europe 2020 goals according to the full extent possible given the overlap of the scope of the EAFRD and the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The nature of each Measure's potential contribution to Europe 2020 is assessed in Table 3.1 below.

TABLE 3.1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEASURES TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	
GLAS/GLAS+	The Europe 2020 objectives and targets most relevant to the GLAS/GLAS+ proposals are those that relate to air pollution control. The scheme is to involve training of farmers in environmental practises and standards, and a whole-farm nutrient management plan as a mandatory requirement, while Tier 1 Priority actions are to include those relating to low-emission slurry spreading and to farms with higher stocking rates.
Organic Farming Scheme	The Measure supporting organic farming is likely to support national targets under the EU 2020 framework only indirectly. Positive employment impacts may occur where existing or new organic producers remain in agricultural employment due to the supports provided, and where alternatives are non-viable. More significant employment impacts however may arise where supply chain, marketing and economies of scale challenges are addressed and new outlets of significant scale for organic produce are opened. The Measure of itself is unlikely to bring all of these circumstances into being, however it will have an important role to play where such wider challenges are addressed. The Measure is also supportive of Europe 2020 targets in the area of air pollution, through promoting practices that avoid chemical or artificial fertilisers and potentially through attracting what may have been more intensive agricultural practices to typically more extensive and sustainable practices which organic production follows.
Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri-Environment Schemes	While likely to be supportive of Europe 2020 goals and objectives at a general level, the degree to which activities supported under this Measure contribute to the achievement of specific objectives is likely to be minimal in a national context, and also dependent on the nature of local environmental needs individual projects are supported in order to address.
Areas of Natural Constraint	The Measure will contribute to Ireland's commitments in respect of Europe 2020 targets particularly relating to employment levels, and reduction in the risk of poverty, while neutral with respect to other 2020 targets.
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II	The TAMS II Scheme is likely to support Europe 2020 targets and objectives in a number of respects. Firstly, by supporting farm investment and modernisation, it is likely to represent an important factor behind agricultural output growth, and as such a source of on-farm employment, offsetting employment losses in sub-sectors less likely to grow and bolstering the sector's overall role in national employment maintenance and growth. In facilitating output and productivity growth, it will also support the sector's role in leading value-added and export growth, and in supporting or enhancing employment in related supply-chains. Secondly, the Measure can be expected to support Europe 2020 climate change objectives, with significant investment in modern slurry storage facilities and low emissions spreading technologies both likely to result and improve the GHG emissions of the farms in question.

TABLE 3.1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEASURES TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	
BioEnergy Scheme	The Bioenergy Scheme will make a positive if relatively minor contribution to employment levels, R&D, reduction in CO2 emissions, as well as enhancing the role and contribution of renewable energy. It also contributes to rural diversification. The extent of such contributions will obviously depend on the areas planted and utilised but unless the margins exceed the opportunity costs the returns may be disappointing.
Knowledge Transfer Groups	<p>The Measure will contribute to a number of EU 2020 targets. It will contribute to the increased usage of R&D results, it will contribute to better practices in relation to both emissions and use of renewable energy.</p> <p>In particular, Knowledge Transfer Groups will contribute to environment and climate change mitigation and adaption objectives. The focus on best practice means that participants in such groups are more likely to farm in a way that complies with environmental requirements and supports greater biodiversity. They are also more likely to farm in a way that is sustainable in the longer term, and not just because of their improved ability to apply technologies that mitigate the effects of climate change, but also because of the greater sensitivity to the changing expectations of consumers in relation to sustainable methods of food production.</p>
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups	<p>It is anticipated that the Measure will contribute to a number of EU 2020 targets, including air pollution and CO2 emissions, and R&D. The Measure will be focusing on how agricultural production can co-exist with environmental sensitivity, and how increased agricultural productivity through innovation can lower the associated environmental demands.</p> <p>In terms of its support to a partnership approach to environmental/agri business co-operation it supports the aspirations of the Operational Programme as a whole, including the LEADER Measure and more widely it supports the approaches recommended in the recent CEDRA report with its emphasis on a locally-led approach to development.</p>
Continued Professional Development for Advisors	The Measure will indirectly contribute to Ireland's commitments to Europe 2020 targets insofar as it increases the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the RDP as a whole, and the Programme as a whole contributes to a number of these targets, including those in relation to R&D, to reduced emissions, renewable energy and rural poverty reduction.
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	<p>The Measure will contribute to aspects of Europe 2020 most directly, the eradication of BVD is estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a value of €26m per annum. Control of Johnne's Disease and dairy cow mastitis (SCC) would also lead to greenhouse gas abatement, although no quantitative estimates for this are available.</p> <p>The Measure will also stimulate R&D and its use in relation to targeted animal diseases, and will contribute to employment by helping to expand and protect the crucial Irish beef and dairy industries, including in export markets. This export protection and promotion effect can involve both compliance with the bilateral controls that can be introduced in export markets, and also by minimising animal health "scares" which can dent consumer confidence.</p>

TABLE 3.1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF MEASURES TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS	
Support for Collaborative Farming	The Europe 2020 objectives and targets most relevant to the support for collaborative farming are those that relate to employment levels and R&D. The scheme will have a mildly positive effect on these parameters while neutral with respect to other 2020 targets.
Beef Data and Genomics Programme	The Measure is likely to contribute to Ireland's commitments in respect of Europe 2020 targets especially relating to employment levels and reduction in GHG emissions. The scheme will have a mildly positive effect on these parameters while neutral with respect to other 2020 targets.
LEADER	LEADER is broadly consistent with and will contribute to the achievement of Europe 2020 targets, albeit given its resources in a relatively modest way. It will particularly contribute to environment objectives, to renewable energy objectives and potentially to poverty reduction, although the nature and content of the latter is less obvious in the Programme as it is currently articulated.
Artisan Food Co-operation (LEADER Delivery)	The Measure will impact positively but marginally towards the Europe 2020 targets relating to employment levels.
Quality Schemes (LEADER Delivery)	The Measure will impact positively but marginally towards the Europe 2020 targets relating to employment levels.

3.3 Consistency

3.3.1 CAP Pillar 1

The general focus of Pillar 1 of the CAP on income support and direct payments for farmers, as against the focus of Pillar 2 on rural development and wider public policies ensures general consistency and distinction between interventions and actions to be delivered under each, and Ireland's proposals within the draft RDP present no general concerns about the consistency between Pillar 2 Measures and Pillar 1 supports. Close compliance with the obligations and terms of the Rural Development Regulation, which the Irish draft Programme displays, also provides reassurance regarding this general consistency.

Similarly, at the level of individual Measures there is little concern regarding Pillar 1 interaction or consistency. The GLAS/GLAS+ proposals have been prepared so as to comply fully with the regulatory requirement that AECM Measures go beyond (and compensate farmers for going beyond) environmental standards that must already be complied with to be eligible for the basic payment scheme under Pillar 1, and the new Greening payment that is to begin in 2015. All actions to be financially supported must therefore go beyond Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) and relevant Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) under cross-compliance requirements. Similarly, organic practices to be supported under Pillar 2 are clearly differentiated from "greening" requirements under Pillar 1 and farmers will only be compensated for those additional and differentiated practices. There are also no concerns regarding the interaction of TAMS with Pillar 1, with eligible farmers open to receive supports under both, with the higher aid rates for younger farmers clearly provided for in the Regulation, and therefore complementing the Young Farmers Scheme and National Reserve within the direct payments regime. Collaborative activities directed specifically at young farmers equally complement specific supports for younger farmers under Pillar 1.

Other Measures are supportive and complementary to Pillar 1 due to being less directly focused on the individual farmer as a beneficiary (e.g. LEADER, CPD for Advisors, Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service), or being supportive of their improved viability, performance, diversification or supply-chain integration (e.g. Bioenergy, Knowledge Transfer Groups, Collaborative Farming or EIPs).

3.3.2 Community Strategic Framework

Article 10 of the CPR provides for the establishment of a Common Strategic Framework, for the purposes of promoting "the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Union". The CSF contains "strategic guiding principles to facilitate the programming process and the sectoral and territorial coordination of Union intervention under the ESI Funds and with other relevant Union policies and instruments, in line with the targets and objectives of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth".

To ensure policy commitments are reflected appropriately by ESI and wider EU investment the CSF incorporates principles and provisions regarding:

- the thematic objectives outlined for all ESI investment over the 2014-2020 period;
- adoption of integrated approaches to the utilisation of ESF funds;
- appropriate co-ordination and establishment of synergies between ESI funds and other Union policies and instruments, including the CAP, Horizon 2020, the Programme for the Environment and Climate

Action (LIFE), Erasmus +, the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), and the Connecting Europe Facility;

- the upholding of horizontal principles including those relating to partnership and multi-level governance, sustainable development, the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, accessibility, addressing demographic change, and climate change mitigation and action;
- the addressing of key territorial challenges of each region and unlocking specific territorial development potentials; and
- the promotion of complementarity and cooperation.

Ireland's draft RDP complies well with the aspirations and provisions of the CSF. Its relationship with and response to the thematic objectives outlined for all ESI funds is made clear, with its response most directly related to the thematic objectives which address enhancing competitiveness of the agricultural sector; supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors; promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; and promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility. Similarly, the draft Programme in its development and implementation proposals has upheld important partnership approaches, in both the consultative approaches it has followed and will feature during its monitoring and management, integrated interventions and the application of integrated Measures that support multiple Priorities and objectives, the need to address horizontal themes and principles, and in ensuring complementarity and co-operation.

3.3.3 Partnership Agreement

The draft RDP is entirely consistent with Ireland's Partnership Agreement and was prepared in close co-ordination with the latter's preparation. While it relates to the approach to and management of Ireland's full suite of ESI funding programmes, there are clear linkages and consistency between it and the draft RDP both the strategic level of needs, disparities and potentials, selected thematic objectives, and results expected, as well as its more cross-fund provisions regarding effective implementation, the upholding of horizontal principles, and other features of governance and management.

3.3.4 Country-Specific Recommendations

Ireland was not subject to any Country-Specific recommendations over the course of its programme of assistance from the IMF/EU/ECB troika, which it exited in early 2014. Since then it has been the subject of a set of recent recommendations issued by the Commission for the 2014 Semester. Actions over 2014 and 2015 are recommended in the following areas:

- budgetary and fiscal strategy;
- reform of the healthcare sector;
- improvements in active labour market policies;
- the low work-intensity of households, the poverty risk of children, and childcare Measures to support female labour force participation;
- the development of the SME sector, particularly its access to finance;
- the performance of the banking sector; and
- the costs and regulation of legal services.

There is only a limited role possible for the RDP in supporting these recommendations, with its scope only indirectly relevant. LEADER can have a role in local rural development initiatives that support, if not directly prioritise, poverty reduction and female labour force participation, while it can also have a role in SME support and development, although with more emphasis on areas such as the encouragement of start-ups, on innovative rural enterprises specifically, and on community enterprise animation and development, than on providing conventional financial services to the SME sector.

3.3.5 Commission Policy Priorities

As was noted in Section 2.5, the Commission Position Paper on Ireland describes what are considered the main challenges for the country, as well as what are considered the Priorities for ESI funding. Three overriding challenges are identified:

- high levels of overall and youth unemployment, increasingly long-term in nature, and the increasing risk of social exclusion;
- insufficient commercialisation of basic research and low availability of finance for the private sector, particularly for SMEs; and
- the inefficient use of resources.

There is clear consistency between the proposals within the draft RDP and these policy Priorities, most particularly in relation to addressing the inefficient use of resources and what the Commission's paper later prescribes as "further need for accompanying structural changes in agriculture" and "to foster economic diversification of rural and fisheries-dependent areas". The RDP Measures addressing biodiversity, renewable energy, water quality, soil, GHG emissions and climate change mitigation are directly relevant and responsive to these Priorities, while the on-farm investment, organic farming, EIP, collaborative farming and Knowledge Transfer Measures each stand to support diversification, structural change and enhanced viability within farming. LEADER Measures meanwhile stand to diversify and develop wider economic sectors and local economies in rural areas.

3.3.6 Food Harvest 2020

The single predominant national strategy of direct relevance to the RDP is Food Harvest 2020. In early 2010 the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine established a committee to prepare a draft strategy for the medium-term development of the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sector for the period to 2020, which was to outline the key actions needed to ensure that the sector contributes to the maximum possible extent to export-led economic recovery and the full development of the smart economy. The Strategy was published in July 2010, and the Minister established a high-level group to oversee its implementation.

The strategy had as its central theme the delivery of smart, green growth within the sector. Smart growth in the sector was highlighted to dovetail with policies seeking to develop the wider smart economy, and was to involve "developing new working relationships in the food chain, piloting new product streams, targeting its resources at new markets, enhancing levels of productivity and competitiveness, and developing leadership positions across a range of sectors." Green growth was to reflect both Ireland's historic association with the colour green and its association with an unspoilt agricultural landscape and temperate climate, while also a reaffirmation of a determination to minimise sectoral impacts on the environment and to ensure growth is environmentally sustainable.

The following overall targets were established:

- increasing the value of primary output in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector by €1.5 billion (a 33% increase compared to the 2007-2009 average);
- increasing the value-added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sector by €3 billion (a 40% increase compared to 2008); and
- achieving an export target of €12 billion for the sector (a 42% increase compared to the 2007-2009 average).

A range of sub-sectoral targets were also established, including:

- to increase output of the beef sector by 20%;
- to achieve a 50% increase in milk production.

For a range of sub-sectors that included beef, dairy, sheep, horticulture, organic, pigmeat, cereals, poultry, seafood, forestry and bio-energy, the Strategy made numerous recommendations to ensure targets would be met, in areas such as sales growth, branding and marketing, gaining or restoring competitiveness, addressing environmental concerns, and supporting innovation.

While there is an arguable tension between the overriding output growth objectives and targets of the Food Harvest strategy and the environmental and biodiversity conservation, protection and sustainability goals of the draft RDP, there is significant complementarity between both, most particularly in the latter's role in facilitating and supporting the former's achievement of its "green" growth ambitions. A number of the RDP Measures seek to enhance the environmental quality and standards of existing farming practices (GLAS being the most significant example), and to extend special protection to sensitive areas (NATURA sites and locally-defined areas). The on-farm investment supports may help facilitate output growth but are likely to do so in ways that make that growth less potentially damaging than otherwise might be the case (e.g. through supporting investment in more sustainable and environmentally-protective facilities and equipment), while numerous other Measures may support competitiveness, diversification, innovation, market development and penetration, and other processes that also need public support and promotion in order for "green" growth to take place. The proposed Beef Data and Genomics Measure also provides a very specific means of addressing the most immediate environmental concern raised by the prospect of output growth in the beef and dairy sectors, namely the requirement to reduce GHG emissions. There are no Measures contained within the draft RDP that stand to either compromise the Pillar 2 goal of promoting more environmentally-sustainable farming, or to deflect or constrain the smart, green growth ambitions of Food Harvest 2020.

3.3.7 Consistency of Measures with Wider Instruments and Policies

Across the individual Measures a high degree of consistency and complementarity with wider specific EU and national instruments and policies is evident. The international and national policies and instruments that will be most directly supported by the agri-environmental Measures include the country's plans and obligations to comply with EU Habitats, Birds, Nitrates and Water Framework Directives, as well as the EU Climate Change and Renewable Energy Package, with each of which it can be expected to support, progress and assist achievement. The EU Action Plan on the future of Organic Production in Europe (March 2014) stands to be supported

specifically by the Organic Farming Measure, as will the more short-term and sector-specific national Organic Farming Action Plan 2013-2015. The Bioenergy scheme will support commitments in the national Renewable Energy Action Plan, while the National Biodiversity Plan will be supported by both agri-environmental Measures and the Areas of Natural Constraint scheme.

More widely, increased human development capacity generally, and Knowledge Transfer in particular, are key themes of agri, food and rural development policies at both EU and national level. Knowledge Transfer contributes to the “SMART” approach which is one of the two central pillars alongside “green” of the Food Harvest 2020 Strategy. The recently published CEDRA Strategy recommended that capacity-building programmes to develop skill-sets required in order to ensure full and comprehensive participation by all communities in rural development planning processes and implementation should be an integral part of the development process at local level.

The main EU instrument relevant to LEADER is the wider EU Rural Development Policy as reflected in the Regulations. This includes in particular the emphasis both across EU funds on CLLD of which LEADER has been a consistent representative in Ireland.

3.3.8 National Policies and Individual RDP Measures

At national level the two main relevant policy areas are the CEDRA report on Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy, and the more general policy Priority of aligning and co-ordinating local development with local Government

The CEDRA report places a strong emphasis on the need for a clear rural policy, on the need for an integrated approach, and on interventions specifically in areas that are included in the OP, i.e. food and beverage (artisan and specialty), creative industries, rural tourism and recreation, marine and renewable energy, as well as enabling supports including broadband and access to finance.¹

In relation to local government and its relationship with local development, the topic has been the subject of ongoing reform and change in Ireland of an often complex and sometimes confusing nature. Key aspects as they relate to LEADER, including LAGs, are as follows:

- During the period of the previous government, a so-called “cohesion” process took place which focused on the organisational integration of the previously separate local partnership companies on the one hand, and LEADER companies on the other and as far as possible having these operate on local government (i.e. county) boundary basis. However, a feature of the process is that in some cases the cohesion was to a degree limited in a number of ways. Firstly, a number of long established LEADER companies (some which pre-dated LEADER) which operated on other boundaries have remained in place. Secondly, in some cases the integration of the separate companies was achieved by the creation of a wider holding company, leaving the separate entities in effect still in place and this adds to the organisational complexity of the current situation.
- Under the period of the present government, a new “alignment” process has been developed with the aim of aligning these hitherto somewhat separate sectors of local government and local development.

¹ Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas, *Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy*, 2013

“Local development” here includes both the previous Partnership companies and the LEADER companies, now officially “cohesed”.

- A widely-based programme of local government reform, including reform of the relationship between local government and local development, was initiated and reported on in 2012 and this added further impetus to the alignment process.

Arising from these twin reports on local government reform generally² and the local government/local development alignment³, it is the Government’s intention to create a new local development co-ordination entity based in local government, but with wider membership, at county level. This was initially referred to as a Socio-economic Committee (SEC) but has recently become a more narrowly based Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), essentially replacing the former City and County Development Boards.

Specifically in relation to LEADER, it has been proposed that this Committee should be considered as the vehicle through which the LEADER approach is implemented for the 2014-2020 round of EU funding. This proposal marks a government decision to make a major move away from the traditional approach to the LAGs in Ireland and to have the new local authority-based entities acting instead in that role. However, the detail of how this is to operate is not yet fully spelled out. We return to this issue in Chapter 5 under implementation.

3.4 Programme Intervention Logic

3.4.1 Overview

As the means of delivery of Pillar 2 of the CAP, the Rural Development Regulation defines the Mission of the EAFRD as follows:

“The EAFRD shall contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy by promoting sustainable rural development throughout the Union in a manner that complements the other instruments of the CAP, the cohesion policy and the common fisheries policy. It shall contribute to the development of a Union agricultural sector that is more territorially and environmentally balanced, climate-friendly and resilient and competitive and innovative. It shall also contribute to the development of rural territories”.

It then defines its three overriding objectives:

“Within the overall framework of the CAP, support for rural development, including for activities in the food and non- food sector and in forestry, shall contribute to achieving the following objectives:

- a) fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;*
- b) ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action;*
- c) achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment”.*

² Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, *Putting People First: Action Plan for Effective Local Government*, Oct. 2012

³ Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group, *Final Report*, Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government, March 2012

Six Union Priorities for Rural Development are then set out in the Regulation, along with a number of Focus Areas under each (Table 3.2)

Priority 1	fostering Knowledge Transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas with a focus on the following areas:	(a) fostering innovation, cooperation, and the development of the knowledge base in rural areas;
		(b) strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry and research and innovation, including for the purpose of improved environmental management and performance;
		(c) fostering lifelong learning and vocational training in the agricultural and forestry sectors.
Priority 2	enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests, with a focus on the following areas:	(a) improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification;
		(b) facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal.
Priority 3	promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture, with a focus on the following areas:	(a) improving competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food chain through quality schemes, adding value to agricultural products, promotion in local markets and short supply circuits, producer groups and organisations and inter-branch organisations;
		(b) supporting farm risk prevention and management.
Priority 4	restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, with a focus on the following areas:	(a) restoring, preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, and in areas facing natural or other specific constraints, and high nature value farming, as well as the state of European landscapes;
		(b) improving water management, including fertiliser and pesticide management;
		(c) preventing soil erosion and improving soil management.
Priority 5	promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors, with a focus on the following areas:	(a) increasing efficiency in water use by agriculture;
		(b) increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing;
		(c) facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non food raw material, for the purposes of the bio- economy;
		(d) reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture;
		(e) fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry;
Priority 6	promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, with a focus on the following areas:	(a) facilitating diversification, creation and development of small enterprises, as well as job creation;
		(b) fostering local development in rural areas;
		(c) enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas

The draft RDP for Ireland does not set itself its own specific Programme-level objectives. Rather, it confirms that the clear national Priorities and challenges that emerged from the SWOT analysis and Needs Assessment means that the national Programme will address “all the Rural Development Objectives and Priorities as contained in

the Rural Development Regulation”, and that the cross-cutting and integrated nature of Measure design means that Measures will contribute to multiple Priorities and related Focus Areas. Thus, the Programme is expected to support each of the three overriding Regulatory objectives, as well as each of the six Union Priorities.

Two key features of the process by which the choice and combination of Measures were arrived at are highlighted in the draft Programme:

- firstly, it was determined that Measures under consideration would deliver the greatest benefit where they cut-across and addressed numerous Priorities and Focus Areas simultaneously; and
- secondly Measures would also be optimal where they mutually supported each other and thus provided an integrated suite of interventions.

The objectives of each of the Programme’s proposed Measures are set out in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3 OBJECTIVES OF RDP MEASURES	
Measure	Objectives
GLAS/GLAS+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote ways of using agricultural land that are compatible with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the protection and improvement of the environment and achieving water quality, climate change and biodiversity objectives; • the conservation of high nature value farmed environments both within and outside of designated Natura 2000 sites; • the use of nutrient management planning in farming practice; and • to foster Knowledge Transfer in the area of sustainable environmental farming systems.
Organic Farming Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage farmers to convert from conventional farming methods and to apply organic farming methods as defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as well as maintain these methods after the initial period of conversion, thus answering society's demand for the use of environmentally friendly farming practices; and • to deliver enhanced environmental and animal welfare benefits and to encourage producers to respond to the market demand for organically produced food.
Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri Environment Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide a complementary approach to the overall agri-environmental effort, one which encourages the development of unique projects designed to respond to specific environmental challenges; and • to promote independent identification of Priorities and, by way of a competitive-call process, to encourage locally-driven solutions.
Areas of Natural Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure continued agricultural land use, thereby contributing to the maintenance of a viable rural society; • to maintain the countryside; and • to maintain and promoting sustainable farming systems, which in particular take account of environmental protection requirements.

TABLE 3.3 OBJECTIVES OF RDP MEASURES	
Measure	Objectives
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage investment in a number of particular target areas which will promote, in particular, increased competitiveness in those sectors in which grant-aid will be made available; and • through providing a higher aid intensity for young farmers, to support young farmers wishing to enter the sector or improve their holdings.
BioEnergy Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to support the development of additional areas of energy crops.
Knowledge Transfer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to contribute to knowledge acquisition and the adoption of best practice in the sector, so as to improve the profitability of participants' enterprises by focusing on selected areas of farm level performance including those associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial management; • grassland management; • herd health; • sustainability; and • animal breeding/welfare.
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and help the Irish agricultural sector to become more productive and efficient by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting operational groups to address issues in areas such as environment and climate change, biodiversity and sustainable production; • bringing together farmers, NGOs, private sector bodies, research institutions and advisors in a partnership type approach to address challenges identified; and • disseminating information through appropriate channels including the EIP Network.
Continued Professional Development for Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to enhance the skills of advisors through delivery of targeted training courses across a range of Measures and therefore to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve their technical skills; • enhance their regulatory knowledge; and • develop their client facing skills.

TABLE 3.3 OBJECTIVES OF RDP MEASURES	
Measure	Objectives
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support national animal health Priorities, as articulated in Food Harvest 2020, by the provision of targeted on farm animal health and welfare advice.
Support for Collaborative Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to encourage greater engagement by the farming community with the concept of collaborative farming, and in particular farm partnerships.
Beef Data and Genomics Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support breeding, quality and potentially traceability activities on suckler farms, and to assist farmers to meet the challenges of improving breed quality and increase the sustainability of beef production from suckler herds.
Support for Quality Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support Group proposals for marketing of distinctive local agricultural products and foodstuffs, and/or for registration and promotion of products under the EU PDO/PGI/TSG quality regimes.
Artisan Food Co-operation Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to enhance the viability of the artisan food sector by providing support for collaborative proposals which seek to improve product quality, enhance relevant skills, and improve access to relevant markets.
LEADER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to support the sustainable economic and social development of rural Ireland.

3.4.2 Intervention Logic at Measure Level

GLAS/GLAS+

The objectives of GLAS are reasonably clearly articulated, and respond well to needs and policy objectives identified in the SWOT and research phases of Programme preparation. They are focused on the second overarching objective for rural development within the Regulation, namely ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, although also compatible with the first and third objectives (fostering the competitiveness of agriculture and achieving balanced territorial development of rural economies). The objectives are of necessity articulated in quite broad and generic terms, which reflect the broad range of effects, changes and environmental improvements a national scheme such as this will seek to bring about. The Measure responds directly and purposefully to Priorities 4 and to a number of Focus Areas under Priority 5, including those concerning GHG and ammonia emission reduction, and carbon conservation and sequestration, and will seek to do so in ways that most reflect what distinguishes Ireland's specific needs under these EU-wide objectives and Priorities.

Its objectives also complement a number of other Measures within the proposed Programme. Most directly it will be a large, national agri-environmental scheme delivering good environmental practices across a wide range of farms, regions and systems that will stand along-side the more targeted and locally-led agri-environment schemes delivered by way of their own separate Measure. It will also complement the more focused and specific organic farming scheme, both in promoting complementary principles of sustainable and natural practices, but also in providing complementary incentives and supports for farmers wishing to participate in both schemes.

Organic Farming

The objectives of this Measure support clearly the overriding objectives of EU rural development policy, most particularly ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, but also in fostering agricultural competitiveness. They also dovetail with the objectives of creating and maintaining employment by offering support to alternative forms of production with growing niche market demand. Several Priorities will be supported, most particularly Priorities 4 and 5, but also Priority 2 insofar as conversion to organic farming may improve viability and economic prospects for some farmers, and finally potentially Priority 3 where farmers are more directly linked into niche supply chains or higher value products by virtue of their organic status.

The Measure will complement a number of other proposed Measures within the Programme, most notably GLAS. Participating farmers that seek to enhance their environmental practices beyond those falling within organic production definitions will be able to avail of support under GLAS/GLAS+. Similarly they stand to gain from participation in or learning from collaborative and quality-focused Measures and initiatives seeking to enhance food supply chains.

Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri- Environment Schemes

The objectives of this Measure are to provide a complementary approach to the overall agri-environment effort, which encourages the development of locally-focused projects designed to respond to specific environmental challenges. It will also seek to promote independent identification of Priorities and, by way of a competitive-call process, to encourage locally-driven solutions.

The Measure can be expected to complement both the national AECM and the organic farming Measure in its approach, objectives and policy-informing outcomes, although care will need to be taken to ensure eligibility rules guard against the potential for double funding across these three schemes. Beyond this, there is also scope for co-operation and collaborative supports to additionally support locally-led projects that emerge from shared local environmental concerns and obligations.

Areas of Natural Constraint

The predecessors to this Measure were first introduced to ensure the continued conservation of the countryside in mountain areas and in certain other less-favoured areas. Farmers in such areas are subject to permanent natural handicaps and thus prevented from achieving a level of income similar to that enjoyed by farms of a comparable type in other regions. This in turn could lead to land abandonment and would jeopardize the viability and continued habitation of the areas. Thus the objective of the Measure was to introduce a form of support to assist the less-favoured farming areas to ensure the continuation of farming, thereby maintaining a minimum population level and conserve the countryside and raise farm incomes in these areas. The main objective of the Measure is fully consistent with the overall programme and RDP objectives and a necessary contribution to the achievement of economic, social and competitive ends in the areas concerned.

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes (TAMS) II

The objectives of the TAMS II Measure are to encourage investment in a number of particular target areas which will promote, in particular, increased competitiveness in those sectors in which grant-aid will be made available. In addition the Measure will seek to support young farmers wishing to enter the sector or improve their holdings, through providing a higher aid intensity in such cases.

The objectives are consistent with overall Union objectives for rural development, in particular the objective of enhancing agricultural competitiveness, the sustainability and climate action objective, and more indirectly, to the employment and balanced economic development objective.

TAMS II is unlikely to undermine or negatively impact the successful implementation of any other proposed Measures within the Programme. While it is likely to be attractive to farmers intending to grow output or enhance productivity, participation is not incompatible with participation in GLAS/GLAS+, particularly given the environmental rationales for participation in TAMS II, and the targeted features of GLAS. The Scheme also has the potential to be both enhanced by, and enhance itself, the Knowledge Transfer Measure, by the latter's provision of fora within which to discuss, learn and share experiences regarding innovations and investment plans, projects, outcomes and gains.

BioEnergy Scheme

The main objective of this Measure is subsumed in the statement that the development of indigenous purpose grown energy crops is far preferable to relying on imported biomass. Ireland already imports some €6.5 billion in fossil fuels annually and it is not in our economic interest to substitute imported fossil fuels with imported biomass. The greatest benefit to Ireland would be the offsetting of imported fossil fuels by indigenous biomass. There is the added benefit of providing an alternative farming enterprise and source of income for individual farmers, with the potential for additional employment in rural areas as supply chains develop and increasing areas of energy crops are established. This is also consistent with the overall objectives of the RD Regulation.

The Measure is neither likely to support or undermine the effects of any other Measure in the Programme. However potential applicants will need to be assured at the outset that there will be profitable market outlets for their produce when their crop would reach maturity.

Knowledge Transfer Groups

The Scheme objectives, as set out in the OP, will be to “contribute to knowledge acquisition and the adoption of best practice in the sector”. It will do so by improving the profitability of participants’ enterprises by focusing on selected areas of farm-level performance, including those associated with financial management; grassland management; herd health; sustainability and animal breeding and welfare.

They are consistent with the overall thrust of the programme objectives and contribute specifically to its Knowledge Transfer theme. They are also consistent with the overarching objectives of rural development at EU level. They will foster competitiveness of agriculture by improving the skills and practices of farmers, they will help ensure sustainable management of natural resources and climate action by encouraging the use of more sustainable practices at farm level; and they will help achieve rural development goals by ensuring that participant farmers are not just the “brightest and best”, but also include farmers from less well developed sectors and areas. In relation to the third objective above, we would propose that the tentative list of focused areas outlined above be reviewed, particularly in the case of cross-cutting groups, with a view to establishing groups in some additional areas that will contribute to that wider objective, e.g. on the use of IT at farm and including less prosperous farm level, and on issues surrounding agricultural structures and inheritance.

European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups

The objectives of this Measure are clearly and appropriately articulated and they do respond to underlying needs, particularly the needs for Knowledge Transfer and sharing and they are consistent with the overall objectives of the Programme:

- they also contribute to the over-arching objectives for rural development as set out in the Regulation, i.e. they will foster competitiveness in agriculture by promoting state-of-the-art sustainable approaches and techniques;
- they will ensure sustainable development of natural resources and climate action given the content and focus of EIPs;
- they will support balanced regional development of rural economies and communities through maintaining on-farm employment in environmentally sensitive areas, and through the fact that many of these areas tend to be in otherwise economically marginal regions, and via enjoining multiple stakeholders in addressing issues in such areas.

Continued Professional Development for Advisors

The implications of the third objective of this Measure (to develop the client-facing skills of the advisors) may need to be more clearly spelled out than is the case in the current draft of the Measure which tends to gravitate in practice towards core agricultural and sectoral skills. The Measure is an enabling one to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the RDP as a whole. Consequently it is consistent with, and contributes to, the overarching objectives of rural development as set out in the Regulation in that the RDP as a whole does this, i.e. fosters the competitiveness of agriculture, ensures the sustainable management of natural resources and climate action,

and helps achieve balance to territorial development of rural economies and communities, including the creation and maintenance of employment.

Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service

This Measure's objectives are clearly stated. These are: "to support national animal health Priorities, as articulated in Food Harvest 2020, by the provision of targeted on-farm animal health and welfare advice". Two areas in which this could possibly be improved would be firstly to remove the reference to welfare. It is indeed true that healthy animals also have better welfare, but the primary objective of this Measure is animal health and there is no overt welfare element. Secondly, reference might also be made to the objectives of AHI which constitutes the more detailed objectives below Food Harvest 2020 in relation to animal health.

The objectives are consistent with the Regulation and in particular they are designed to foster the competitiveness of Irish agriculture by improving, animal husbandry, productivity, in particular in the two major sectors of dairy and beef; it helps to ensure the sustainable management of the natural resources constituted by these herds, and also to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, and finally it contributes to the balanced development of rural communities by helping to maintain the vibrant agricultural and agri-food sector.

Support for Collaborative Farming

The objectives of this Measure are to support farmers working in overall programme and RDP objectives and a necessary contribution to the achievement of economic, social and competitive ends especially in the dairy sector.

There are unlikely to be any negative effects to this Measure and in fact the contrary is the more likely. The Measure is likely to be mutually supportive to TAMS II. It would be useful if this Measure were supported and promoted jointly with the latter Scheme.

Beef Data and Genomics Programme

The main objective of this Measure is to achieve a more sustainable, competitive, efficient, and profitable beef breeding sector. The economic and environmental sustainability of the beef sector was a prevalent topic during the public consultation and SWOT analysis while at the same time it is recognized that the suckler beef herd is an important land use and economic activity especially in western areas. The most cost effective response to climate change mitigation in agriculture is a targeted Measure that will deliver accelerated genetic improvement in the quality of the beef herd using genomics technology. This will help farmers to maximise productivity in a sustainable way, while supporting improved quality, fertility, animal health and welfare, reduced emissions intensity and ultimately profitability in the national suckler herd, as set out under the FH 2020 strategy. These objectives are particularly consistent with the overarching objectives of rural development as set out in the Regulation.

LEADER

At one level the objective of the LEADER Measure is to implement the required LEADER approach in Ireland. However, in terms of its substantive objectives on the ground, these are not clearly articulated to date in either the draft Operational Programme or in draft descriptions of the Measure and presence or absence of such descriptions is not consistent in the various documentation.

The draft descriptions of the Measures provided to Ex Ante Evaluation cite the objective as being “LEADER aims to support the sustainable economic and social development of rural Ireland”. This is clearly a very broad objective. Subsequent more detailed descriptions of the Programme do not contain a section on objectives.

In terms of the three overall objectives of the Regulations, LEADER is clearly consistent with two of these. It will not foster the competitiveness of agriculture since it is not directed at on-farm activities. However, it will help ensure sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, and above all it will contribute to balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, and the maintenance of rural employment, which are its primary focus.

The Measure is likely to support the success of other Measures within the Programme. Specifically, the Measures on Artisan Food Co-operation and Quality Schemes are to be administered by LEADER. Clearly, therefore, the success in establishing the LEADER Programme and structures as a whole will have an effect on how these two Measures are implemented.

Artisan Food Co-operation (LEADER Delivery)

The objective of this Measure is consistent with the overall Programme and rural development objectives. The Measure is neither likely to support or undermine the effects of any other Measure in the Programme. However since this Scheme is complementary to the LEADER programme and will be delivered by that approach it will be essential that there is maximum co-operation between LAGs to deliver on collaborative proposals.

Quality Schemes (LEADER Delivery)

This Measure’s objective is also consistent with the overall Programme and rural development objectives. The Measure is neither likely to support nor undermine the effects of any other Measures in the Programme, however as with the Artisan Food Measure, it will be important that there is maximum co-operation between LAGs to deliver collaborative activities.

In addition to the vertical consistency of Measure objectives with overriding EU aims and objectives for the EAFRD, and the consistency across Measures which are in the whole mutually supportive of those EU goals and complement each other in their specific goals, it is also quite clear that the intentional approach of addressing all EU Priorities and with a range of Measures that do so in multi-faceted and integrated ways, is achieved in the intervention logic adopted. Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationship between EU Priorities and Focus Areas, and the Measures included in the draft Programme, in terms of primary and direct links, and more secondary and indirect links, and it confirms that:

- all Priorities are addressed with Measures that support them both directly and indirectly;
- all Focus Areas (with the single exception of that one supporting efficiency in water use, which has little relevance to Ireland given the non-necessity for irrigation) are addressed, in all cases with Measures that support them directly and in most cases with other Measures that do so indirectly.

FIGURE 3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RDP MEASURES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

RDP Measure	Priority	Two		Three		Four			Five					Six		
	Focus Area	2a	2b	3a	3b	4a	4b	4c	5a	5b	5c	5d	5e	6a	6b	6c
GLAS/GLAS+						■	■	■				■	■			
Organic Farming Scheme						■	■	■				■				
Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri- Environment Schemes						■	■	■				■				
Areas of Natural Constraint		■				■	■	■								
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II		■	■							■		■				
BioEnergy Scheme										■				■	■	
Knowledge Transfer Groups		■			■	■	■	■		■		■				
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups		■				■	■	■				■				
Continued Professional Development for Advisors						■	■	■				■				
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service		■			■											
Support for Collaborative Farming		■	■	■												
Beef Data and Genomics Programme		■										■				
LEADER											■			■	■	■
Artisan Food Co-operation (LEADER Delivery)				■										■	■	
Quality Schemes (LEADER Delivery)				■										■	■	

primary relationship
 secondary/indirect relationship

3.5 Forms of Support

The main forms of support provided for in the Programme include the payment for certain services (e.g. training, facilitation, research), the provision of small grants to SMEs and other entities (e.g. under LEADER), and compensatory grants or payments to farmers to support investment or compensate for additional costs or public good actions. The evaluators are supportive of the forms of support RDP Measures are intended to provide. A comment on each is made in Table 3.4.

GLAS/GLAS+	GLAS/GLAS+ will financially compensate farmers for delivering sustainable and environmentally-responsible agricultural practices through direct grants. The rationale for this approach lies in the public good nature of the Scheme's objectives and the need for public support to most directly and simply deliver and ensure those public good outcomes. It is the correct and most appropriate form of support, in that support needs to take the most simplified, fair and centrally-determined form capable of being absorbed and understood by large numbers of farmers while having an experienced national administration and delivery system appropriate to the task. As well as being the form of support all agri-environmental schemes have adopted in the past, features of the Scheme including its flat basic rates of payment, the ceilings in place for payments to individual farms, the tiered structure, and the targeted and tailored nature of change and therefore financial compensation applicable to individual farms, mean any other forms of support would be of questionable relevance or workability.
Organic Farming Scheme	The Measure will operate through a system of grant aid compensating farmers for the costs associated with converting to and maintaining organic production. This follows from the existing and predecessor organic farming schemes and moving to any alternative would risk complicating and dis-incentivising participation.
Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri- Environment Schemes	Support under this Measure is intended to be by way of an annual grant, with projects potentially running over many years. Eligible costs are to include those relating to compliance, income foregone, transaction, administration and facilitation. There may be scope to determine tailored forms of support appropriate to unique projects and proposals under this Measure, however the appropriateness of any bespoke approaches cannot be commented on at this stage.
Areas of Natural Constraint	Grant payments will be made in respect of eligible land, with different rates of aid applicable, based on a number of designations. As eligible costs are determined on the basis of the costs and income foregone linked to the area of disadvantage, the aid in the form of an annual grant is the most appropriate.
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II	Support is to be provided by grant in relation to a portion of eligible costs incurred. The approach is appropriate given the need to balance simplicity, certainty for the farmer, familiarity, and administrative capacity of the Department.
BioEnergy Scheme	The support would be paid up to a percentage of the crop establishment costs subject to a maximum grant level per hectare. In addition it is proposed to pay a premium for three years in respect of the income foregone in establishing the crop. This is a new feature and together with the establishment is the most appropriate form of support in the circumstances.
Knowledge Transfer Groups	The form of support is appropriate and strongly reflects the Commission requirements and guidelines in this regard. The support will involve direct non-repayable financial support provided to facilitators, and through them to participant farmers, to support the costs of the Knowledge Transfer Groups.
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups	The nature of the support will involve grant support channelled towards the setting up and operations of new EIP Operational Groups, chosen on a competitive basis. This would entail DEAFM as the Managing Authority, in consultation with external stakeholders, identifying Priority issues on the basis of a call for proposals. This competitive call and the subsequent evaluation of proposals would draw on relevant expertise.

TABLE 3.4 ASSESSMENT OF FORMS OF SUPPORT

Continued Professional Development for Advisors	Financial support will be provided to agricultural advisors through the payment for the services of suitably qualified professional trainers. As per the Rural Development Regulation, a maximum amount of €200,000 over three years for any one provider will apply for the delivery of CPD, i.e. €66,666 per annum. The Department has correctly sought clarification on the basis for this provision because it seems very restrictive in the context of a relatively small country where there may be limited numbers of suitable providers. The providers will be sought through professional tender.
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	Financial support will be provided to two activities under the Measure: (a) The specialist training provided for veterinarians in relation to the prevention and control of the targeted diseases; (b) Visits by these trained veterinarians to provide on-farm advice in instances of the targeted diseases. The language of the Measure is, in some instances, slightly confusing in that it refers to the training as the “training of trainers” and the veterinarians’ activities as training farmers. Strictly speaking it is the veterinarians who are being trained and they are advising farmers, rather than training them. Both the specialist trainers and the veterinary advisors will be recruited via competitive tendering.
Support for Collaborative Farming	When the new Register of Farm Partnerships is in place, all new farm partnerships meeting the requirements for entry on to the Register will receive a contribution of 50% towards the vouched costs in legal, accounting and business planning expenditure involved in setting up the partnership up to a maximum of €2,500. This Measure is aimed at encouraging new farm partnerships. It is probably the most appropriate and workable form of support as more than one individual is the beneficiary.
Beef Data and Genomics Programme	An annual payment will be made to each farmer who meets the requirements of the Measure. The costings being developed will be based on the income foregone and costs incurred in relation to the specific actions outlined, and therefore a grant is the most appropriate form of support.
LEADER	LEADER finance will be used to support LEADER activity, through approved LAGs, of the following kinds: preparatory support of LEADER Plans; implementation of operations under the CLLD Strategy; and preparation and implementation of co-operation activities of the local action group; LEADER running costs and animation. These will constitute the Sub-measures of the LEADER Measure as a whole.
Artisan Food Co-operation (LEADER Delivery)	The proposed scheme will consist of an annual grant support at a rate of 60% of approved costs for collaborative proposals and activities to assist artisan food producers to, inter alia, improve and validate production quality and improve awareness and marketability of locality and niche category products. A grant is the most appropriate form of support given the complexities of supporting Group activities.
Quality Schemes (LEADER Delivery)	It is proposed to provide grant support for developing Group proposals for marketing of distinctive local agricultural products and foodstuffs, and/or for registration and promotion of products under the EU PDO/PGI/TSG quality regimes. A grant is the most appropriate form of support given the complexities of supporting Group activities.

3.6 Contribution of Measures to Achieving Targets

Targets are established in the indicator plan and for the Performance Framework and are assessed in Section 4. As discussed there, they relate to both financial progress (i.e. expenditure levels) as well as Measure outputs, such as the number of agricultural holdings supported, the number of farmers trained, the number of operational groups established or the quantity of agricultural land under agri-environmental contracts. No targets are established for “results”, in the sense of further impacts or objectives such as the increased viability of farms, the increased skills or qualifications of farmers, or the improvements to biodiversity on supported farms.

Output targets included in the RDP are all relevant to the objectives and scope of the individual Measure to which they relate, and in general capture the immediate effects of the expenditure in quantified terms, even where they do not capture results or ultimate impacts. In this sense therefore, the targets established provide yardsticks that exhibit the degree of basic progress in financial and non-financial terms. How individual Measures contribute to overriding objectives and Union Priorities meanwhile has been assessed in Section 3.4.

3.7 Consistency of Budgetary Allocations

3.7.1 Overall Consistency

Table 3.5 provides an overview of the draft RDP, in terms of the Measures included and their proposed funding amounts and shares.

TABLE 3.5 OVERVIEW OF DRAFT RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME		
Measures	Total Co-financed Public Funding (€m)	% of total
Agri-Environment and Climate Measures		
GLAS / GLAS +	1,450	36.2%
Organic Farming Scheme	44	1.1%
Locally led targeted Agri-Environment Schemes	70	1.7%
Areas of Natural Constraint (including support for island farmers)	1,370	34.2%
On Farm Capital Investments		
TAMS II	395	9.9%
BioEnergy	12	0.3%
Knowledge Transfer Measures		
Knowledge Transfer Groups	100	2.5%
EIP Operational Groups	4	0.1%
Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors	2	0.0%
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	6	0.1%
Collaborative Measures		
Support for Collaborative Farming	3	0.1%
Targeted Support		
Beef Data and Genomics Programme	295	7.4%
LEADER	250	6.2%
Technical Assistance	6	0.1%
TOTAL	4,007	100.0%

The evaluators are broadly supportive of the financial balance within the Programme as currently stipulated. The overall balance as currently struck responds to numerous considerations:

- the finite levels of EU and national funding available;

- the need to allocate minimum levels of EAFRD funding to EAC Measures and to LEADER as regulatory requirements;
- the need to anticipate interest and uptake for different schemes and Measures that are largely demand-driven;
- the need to consider the delivery capacity for other Schemes and Measures more supply-driven;
- the need to provide for the widest levels of participation for a number of large Schemes and Measures.

While meeting the regulatory requirement to allocate very significant resources to agri-environmental Measures and those supporting ecosystems, biodiversity, water, soil and GHG emission aims, and also fulfilling minimum requirements for the funding of LEADER, the balance thereafter demonstrates a primacy given to the compensatory needs of farmers and the public good/environmental needs of farms in disadvantaged areas, and to a lesser degree the goals of supporting farm competitiveness and modernisation, and the productivity and sustainability of growth of the beef herd. Allocations to renewable energy goals and to organic farming are quite modest relative to these other aims as well as relative to precedent in these specific areas in Ireland, while in most other Measures allocations are relatively small but perhaps appropriately so as many Schemes are new and supply-led (e.g. EIP Groups, animal health and welfare advice, etc).

However it will be important that the flexibility to re-distribute funding as the Programme evolves is maintained and re-allocations are made where they are warranted based on progress, effectiveness and impact of Measures or the lack thereof. As well as re-allocations of resources that may be warranted as implementation progresses, there is also the possibility of additional national funding being made available should national budgetary prospects improve, and this should also be considered where there is evidence of strong public returns on public investment. A critical role of the Mid-Term Review is therefore anticipated in relation to the balance of Programme resourcing based on the evidence of success to that point.

3.7.2 Unit Cost Consistency

Below are comments on the evident consistency between overall budgets and unit costs anticipated under each Measure.

GLAS/GLAS+

The RDP documentation states that the intention will be to provide up to €5,000 per annum for beneficiary farmers, and that minimum contract period will be five years. It is intended that at its peak, 50,000 farmers will participate. At the maximum grant rate and minimum contract period, this would therefore require a budget of €1,250m. The overall budget therefore would meet this, as well as have some provision for where contracts are for longer than five years, as well as for GLAS+ payments (of up to €2,000 per annum per farmer), where farmers who take on particularly challenging actions which deliver an exceptional level of environmental benefit (although this provision is stated as being subject to budgetary limitations). The overall budget is therefore consistent with the stated output targets.

Organic Farming Scheme

Not enough information is provided in the Measures descriptions reviewed by the evaluators to comment on the unit cost consistency of this budget. The indicator plan establishes a target for 81,000 hectares being maintained as organically-farmed land, and 21,000 being supported for conversion to organic. Combined, this suggests payments for up just over 100,000 hectares per annum at peak. The total budget if spread evenly over a 6 year period would provide annual payments of €7.3m, or €73 per hectare for 100,000 hectares.

Targeted and Locally-Led Output-based Agri- Environment Schemes

Two core projects are proposed under this Measure, as well as financial support for a range of smaller projects to be selected under competitive calls. No standard unit cost comparison is therefore possible, however there will be scope to deliver and manager these features within the overall budget.

Areas of Natural Constraint

The documentation asserts a target of 95,000 beneficiary farmers at peak, with payments set according to eligible costs relating to designates areas. Additional payments are planned for Island farmers (although the rates had not been established in documents provided to the evaluators). The overall budget would provide funding of just over €14,000 per farmer (or approximately €2,400 for each of six years of payments). These amounts are broadly consistent with indications of likely aid rates per farm in designated areas.

Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II (TAMS II)

The Measure description reviewed by the evaluators states that “in order to ensure that the available budget is respected, it is proposed that a “super ceiling” of €80,000 per holding over the lifetime of the RDP be put in place”. It also states that the Scheme will seek to support 6,300 young farmers and 19,000 other farmers. In broad terms, the total budget therefore implicitly assumes the ceiling will be reached in relatively few cases. Where 25,300 farmers supported, the budget would allow an average payment of approximately €15,600. The Measure is recognised however as being one of high demand from farmers, and interest is likely to exceed resources.

BioEnergy Scheme

Precise payment rates (particularly for the years following planting) had not been confirmed in documents reviewed by the evaluators. However an overall target of 500 beneficiaries is established, with payments likely to be in respect of a single year (for establishment) and over three subsequent years while crops mature. On average the budget would facilitate a maximum payment per beneficiary of €24,000 over the four years. At 500 beneficiaries, the overall budget therefore will limit the number of hectares payable against or the premium paid per year following establishment.

Knowledge Transfer Groups

The eligible Programme costs associated with the Groups will include those associated with training courses, workshops and coaching, participant’s costs for travel, per diem expenses and replacement farmer costs. However there is insufficient detail on the likely total costs for individual groups, on the number of farmers per group, or the costs for participating farmers, to check the consistency of the overall budget with output targets. The indicator plan stipulates a total target of approximately 26,000 farmers to participate, which means the total costs provided in the budget equates to approximately €3,800 per farmer, although these will need to cover more than the farmer costs.

European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups

10 EIP Operational Groups are to be supported, suggesting an average budget of €400,000 each, and support will be provided for feasibility studies, animation costs, running costs and promotion. However the unit costs of individual Groups has not been established or estimated in detail.

Continued Professional Development for Advisors

A total of 1,500 advisors are expected to be trained, suggesting an average Programme cost of approximately €1,300 for each advisor participating. Training courses will be selected according to competitive tender procedures. However this doesn't provide sufficient information to confirm the unit cost consistency with the overall budget.

Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service

The Scheme anticipates providing 10,000 farmers with a specialist veterinarian advisory service, where a half day's professional fee will be paid to participating veterinarians to provide advice to individual farmers. Additional costs will arise for the specialist training of the veterinarians in advance. Per farmer, the total budget provided is therefore €600, which seems broadly consistent with the veterinarian's half day fee as well as the element of prior training each vet will receive (and which will be included in the Programme costs).

Support for Collaborative Farming

Financial support here will be for up to 50% of the eligible costs of participating in a collaborative group, up to a maximum of €2,500 per participant. A total of 1,200 groups are targeted for support. Eligible costs will include the legal, financial and business planning cost involved in setting up a new collaborative venture. At the maximum support level per Group, the budget provides for this number of collaborative groups.

Beef Data and Genomics Programme

Costs under this Measure will be in the form of annual payments to farmers who comply with the terms of the Scheme, and there is a range of likely activities such farmers will need to undertake to comply. However no estimate of the average costs per farm or the total number of farms targeted have been arrived at in the material provided to the evaluators.

LEADER

Given its nature and the level of information available there is no basis on which to check unit cost consistency under this Measure.

3.8 National Rural Network

Section 17 of the draft RDP addresses the National Rural Network (NRN), and has sub-sections dealing with:

- the procedure and timetable for its establishment;
- its organisational structure, how stakeholders will be involved, and how networking activities will be facilitated;
- a summary description of its main activities; and
- a discussion of its resourcing.

The evaluators would support all of the proposals made in this regard. It may be useful to clarify the form, role and function of the Network Support Unit and the distinction between it and the NRN itself in the text. There may also be quite an important distinct role in supporting a smooth transition to new LEADER delivery structures in specific locations which may also be worthy of consideration and may affect NRN planning. In addition, the acceptance or otherwise of Ex-Ante Evaluation recommendations may have implications for the work or activities of the NRN.

3.9 Technical Assistance

The draft Programme document includes numerous references to Technical Assistance:

In the Programme section dealing with implementation arrangements, it is stated that Technical Assistance will fund:

- the independent mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the Programme;
- the national rural network (NRN);
- the Communication Plan on information and publicity;
- expenses incurred in the operation of the National Monitoring Committee; and
- expenses relating to the ongoing evaluation of the Programme in accordance the evaluation plan.

Other references include the following:

- in the Evaluation Plan reference is made to the role of DAFM in engaging external Technical Assistance to assist with evaluation as required as well as defining where it will be required;
- the Evaluation Plan also refers to the potential recovery from Technical Assistance funds of costs associated with implementation of the RDP Data Analytics system for evaluation reporting.

These activities and purposes to which Technical Assistance resources will be put are appropriate.

However it may also be beneficial to state in the Programme how technical assistance will be strategically utilised to support effective Programme implementation and delivery (such as research, information, system development, training, facilitation etc), in addition to the specific costs it could cover. Also, if accepted, a number of the Ex-Ante Evaluation recommendations could be supported or resourced through this channel.

4. Programme Progress and Results

4.1 Introduction

The Section presents the assessment of proposals for programme performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation. Section 4.2 addresses programme-specific indicators, and is followed by the appraisal of the quantified target values for indicators. Section 4.4 considers the suitability of milestones for the Performance Framework (PF), while Section 4.5 turns to wider proposals for Programme monitoring and evaluation.

4.2 Programme-Specific Indicators

The draft RDP includes a detailed table of common context indicators and their relevant value for Ireland, however no programme-specific context indicators are set out. Output indicators and corresponding targets have however been established, as are the indicators and targets that form the proposed performance framework. These are assessed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

4.3 Quantified Target Values for Indicators

A detailed set of worksheets that together present the proposed indicator plan for the RDP have been shared with the evaluators. While organised in relation to EU Priorities and Focus Areas, Table 4.1 presents the key indicators and their respective 2020 targets according to the individual RDP Measures that are expected to deliver them. Financial Indicators are not shown as they simply reflect Measure budgets.

Measure	Indicator	2020 Target
GLAS/GLAS+	Area (ha) under agri-environment-climate	2,300,000
	Area (ha) (e.g. green cover, catch crop, reduced fertilisation, extensification...)	164,750
Organic Farming Scheme	Area (ha) in conversion to organic farming	26,000
	Area (ha) in maintenance of organic farming	81,000
Areas of Natural Constraint	other (non mountain) areas with significant natural constraints (ha)	3,402,000
	areas with specific constraints (ha)	15,000
Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Schemes II TAMS II	Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (focus area 2a)	14,450
	Nr of holdings supported for investment in agricultural holdings (support to the business plan of young farmers) (focus area 2b)	6,300
	Nr of operations supported for investment (in agricultural holdings, in processing and marketing of ag. products) (focus area 5b)	125
	Nr of operations supported for investment (e.g. manure storage, manure treatment) (focus area 5d)	300
	LU concerned by investment in livestock management in view of reducing GHG and ammonia emissions (focus area 5d)	13,800

TABLE 4.1 SUMMARY OF INDICATORS AND TARGETS IN INDICATOR PLAN

BioEnergy Scheme	Nr of operations supported for investment	500
Knowledge Transfer Groups	Nr of participants in training (total)	26,670
	Nr of participants in training (focus area 2a) (rounded)	6,650
	Nr of participants in training (focus area 3b) (rounded)	6,650
	Nr of participants in training (Priority 4) (rounded)	6,650
	Nr of participants in training (focus area 5d) (rounded)	6,650
European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups	Nr of EIP operational groups to be supported (establishment and operation)	10
Continued Professional Development for Advisors	Nr. of Advisors Trained	1,500
	25% under focus area 2a	375
	50% under Priority 4	750
	25% under focus area 5d	375
Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service	Nr of beneficiaries advised	10,000
Support for Collaborative Farming	Nr of other cooperation operations (groups, networks/clusters, pilot projects...)	1,200
	No of these that will be young farmers (linked to FA 2b)	900
LEADER	Number of LAGs selected	33
	Population covered by LAG	3,846,834

In addition to the above, a set of more detailed data regarding agri-environmental indicators has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Managing Authorities.

At an overall level the evaluators consider the quantified targets for these indicators as reasonable and reflective of likely outcomes that can be anticipated in the context of the design and specification of Measures and the overall Programme as currently articulated.

In many respects the target values simply reflect what can be anticipated given the overall Measure budget and what can reasonably be assumed to the order of magnitude of unit costs (or what is considered their maximum or ceiling should be). In these cases the target values have a simple and direct relationship with the total financial resources allocated.

Other targets include breakdowns of overall targets for Measures into different categories (e.g. of beneficiary or support area). Examples include the proportion of young farmers likely to be supported for on-farm investments or in collaborative groups, or the proportion of on-farm investments in support of different objectives (e.g. manure storage/treatment), or the proportion of recipients of training in areas such as GHG emission reduction, in agri-environment, in on-farm competitiveness or in risk management. In these cases the targets are reasonable estimates based on precedent, on anticipated demand, on the policy Priorities and in light of the control DAFM will have in how funds will be ultimately distributed under these Measures.

All of targets values for indicators in the plan, have, in the view of the evaluators, a simple and realistic basis and rationale.

4.4 Suitability of Milestones for Performance Framework

The milestones and targets within the draft Performance Framework (as provided to the evaluators) are summarised in Table 4.2.

As per the guidance and templates required, these are organised according to the Union Priorities 2 to 6 (Priority 1 is taken to be cross-cutting across the other Priorities). Beyond the financial milestones and targets, they are also largely stated in terms of outputs, and in many cases they cross-refer to the targets in the indicator plan discussed above. In addition to the timing issues (an intermediate milestone or an ultimate longer term target), as such their appropriateness relates more to how Measure-level outputs (milestones and targets) have been judged to support (and have been allocated across) individual Priorities and Focus Areas, more than their aggregate individual levels per se.

Comments on the milestones set for individual Priorities are set out below.

Priority Two

Expenditure contributing to Focus Area 2a will comprise spending under the TAMS, Knowledge Transfer, CPD for Advisors EIP and Collaborative Farming Measures, and of their spending in relation to this Focus Area, 2018 milestones are set at 50% of 2023 targets in all cases with the exception of TAMS whose milestone is slightly below this. In aggregate therefore the expenditure milestone seems reasonable and plausible, with the financial progression of no Measures considered likely to accelerate in the initial years. The output indicator corresponds to the TAMS Measure only, and here the milestone represents 43% of 2023 target, which again seems reasonable and conservative, particularly as this Measure is likely to be in high demand.

Under Focus Area 2b, both expenditure and activity milestones for TAMS support specifically for young farmers are set at just under 40% of 2023 targets, while the expenditure target for Collaborative Groups focused on young farmers is estimated to reach 50%. Again, both sets of milestones seem reasonable and plausible.

Priority Three

The draft Performance Framework includes milestones and targets for Focus Area 3a only, and in respect of expenditure only. Here, spending supporting farm risk prevention and management is made up of contributions from the Knowledge Transfer and animal health and welfare Measures, with their combined expenditure milestone representing just under 50% of the 2023 target. Once again this seems like a conservative and reasonable milestone for 2018 achievement under these activities.

TABLE 4.2 SUMMARY OF DRAFT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK					
Priority	Focus Area	Indicator	Contributing Measure	2018 Milestone	2023 Target
2	(a) improving the economic performance of all farms and facilitating farm restructuring and modernisation, notably with a view to increasing market participation and orientation as well as agricultural diversification;	total public expenditure (€m)		147.05	339.5
			TAMS	68.8	150.0
			Knowledge Transfer Groups	12.5	25.0
			CPD for Advisors	0.25	0.5
			European Innovation Partnerships	0.5	1.0
Collaborative Farming	0.375	0.75			
		Number of agriculture holdings with RDP support for investment in restructuring or modernisation		6,300	14,450
2	(b) facilitating the entry of adequately skilled farmers into the agricultural sector and, in particular, generational renewal.	total public expenditure (€m)		64.625	162.25
			TAMS (Young Farmers)	63.5	160
			Collaborative Farming (Young Farmers)	1.125	2.25
			Number of agricultural holdings with RDP supported business development plan/investment for young farmers	2,500	6,300
3	(b) supporting farm risk prevention and management.	total public expenditure (€m)		19.5	41.0
			Knowledge Transfer Groups	12.5	25.0
			Targeted AHW Advisory	3.0	6.0
			Targeted AHW Advisory (TAMS)	4.0	10.0

TABLE 4.2 SUMMARY OF DRAFT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Priority	Focus Area	Indicator	Contributing Measure	2018 Milestone	2023 Target
4	all Focus Areas	total public expenditure (€m)		1,991.0	3,023.0
			GLAS/GLAS+	925.0	1450.0
			Organic Farming	22.0	44.0
			Knowledge Transfer Groups	12.5	25.0
			CPD for Advisors	0.5	1.0
			TAMS	20.0	61.0
			Targeted and Local AECM/EIP	36.0	72.0
			Areas of Natural Constraint	975.0	1,370.0
		Agricultural land under management contracts contributing to biodiversity, improving water management, and improving soil management and/preventing soil erosion (ha)	2,379,000	2,407,000	
		ha under GLAS	2,300,000	2,300,000	
ha under Organic (conversion)	16,000	26,000			
ha under Organic (maintenance)	63,000	81,000			

TABLE 4.2 SUMMARY OF DRAFT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Priority	Focus Area	Indicator	Contributing Measure	2018 Milestone	2023 Target
5	(b) increasing efficiency in energy use in agriculture and food processing;	total public expenditure (€m)		0.4	1.0
			TAMS	0.4	1.0
	(c) facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non food raw material, for the purposes of the bio- economy;	Number of operations supported		50	125
		total public expenditure (€m)		6.0	12.0
	(d) reducing green house gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture;		Bioenergy	6.0	12.0
		Number of operations supported		250	500
total public expenditure (€m)			14.55	30.5	
		TAMS	1.3	4	
		Knowledge Transfer Groups	12.5	25	
		CPD for Advisors	0.25	0.5	
		Targeted and Local AECM/EIP	0.5	1	
6	all Focus Areas	total public expenditure (€m)		110.0	250.0
		Population covered by LAGs		3,846,834	3,846,834

Priority Four

Focus Areas under Priority Four are combined for the purposes of the Performance Framework, and while dominated by expenditure under the agri-environment and ANC Measures, expenditure supporting the Priority is also provided under the Organic Farming, Knowledge Transfer, CPD for advisor and TAMS Measures. In relation to expenditure, progress is projected to be more advanced than under other Priorities, with the combined financial milestone representing 66% of the 2023 target, and ranging from 33% in relation to the TAMS contribution to 71% in the case of the ANC contribution. These higher levels of financial progression at the 2018 stage are also reasonable however as both the agri-environment and ANC Measures have much precedent and familiarity amongst farmers and in the Department, and the levels and timing of expenditure can be predetermined with much confidence.

The only non-financial indicator relates to the quantity of agricultural land under agri-environmental (or organic farming) contracts, and here the 2018 milestones are 100% of the 2023 for GLAS, and 77% and 62% for organic farming (under maintenance and conversion respectively). Again these milestones seem realistic given how payments occur annually over multi-annual contracts in all cases.

Priority Five

Milestones are included for Focus Areas 5b, 5c and 5d, and only in respect of financial targets under Focus Area 5c. Under 5b, a proportion of TAMS funding is allocated as representing investment in enhanced energy use on pig and poultry farms, with 40% of both the expenditure and the number of such operations supported put forward as the 2018 milestone. Under Focus Area 5c, 50% of the expenditure and number of participant farms under the Bioenergy Measure are put forward as the 2018 milestones, while under Focus Area 5d, expenditure under TAMS, Knowledge Transfer, CPD for advisors and the targeted/local AEC Measures each contribute, with their milestones representing 50% of targets in all cases other than TAMS (for which it is 32%). All milestones under this Priority also therefore signal an expectation of steady and balanced progress up to 2018, and are judicious in the circumstances.

Priority Six

Finally, the 2018 financial milestones under Priority 6 (for all Focus Areas) represents 44% of 2023 target. While not unrealistic per se, its achievement may depend on how quickly and effectively the changed delivery model for LEADER establishes itself. The non-financial milestone relating to population in areas served by LAGs is somewhat meaningless as an indicator of progress as such.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The draft Programme contains an Evaluation Plan, prepared in accordance with the relevant Regulations and Commission Guidelines. The Plan therefore deals with objectives, governance and coordination, evaluation topics and activities, data and information, timeline, communication, and resources.

The Plan text is extensive and comprehensive, and it shows a good understanding and appreciation of the Commissions expectations and requirements, and of the close links between monitoring and evaluation. Reflecting the Commission's guidance, it does however contain some blurring of the boundary between monitoring and evaluation, the former being a more routine activity relying on regular data and the latter more

occasional more in-depth assessments using other information sources also. This, and the considerable content in the section on Monitoring, means it might be better seen as, and titled, a “Monitoring and Evaluation Plan”.

The Plan does also deal more clearly with aspects of monitoring than with evaluation. The time line shown for example relates to monitoring activity and to the Annual Implementation Reports, but gives no suggestion of what evaluations might be done and when. For example in the early stages Priority might be given to newer but critical Measures such as those in the Knowledge Transfer area, to Measures with untested implementation arrangements eg LEADER, to those attracting the bulk of funding, and to those which might be candidates for financial reallocation at mid-term stage.

On governance the Plan sets out how the planned Evaluation Monitoring and Evaluation Steering group will report to the OP Coordinating Committee, but its relationship with the Monitoring Committee is not set out. It is also not indicated how much evaluation will be carried out internally or externally, and in the case of internally how “functional independence” of internal evaluators will be ensured (e.g. placing them in the Department Economics and Planning Division).

On evaluation in particular the Section is also quite broad and aspirational in nature with a lot of quite broad commitments regarding good practice without detail of how these will be met.

The resources likely to be required for both monitoring and evaluation are correctly identified as considerable, but no estimates of scale are given. It can be validly argued that at this stage it is too early to provide such detail, and this has to be accepted. However, it is important that a more detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, with more overt cross-linkage to the Inclinitor Plan and the Performance Framework parts of the Programme is drawn up and approved by the monitoring Committee prior to OP commencement.

5. Horizontal Principles and Implementation Arrangements

5.1 Introduction

This Section addresses the treatment and consideration of the horizontal principles of equal opportunities and discrimination prevention, and sustainable development, in the draft RDP. Section 5.3 then turns to implementation capacity, considering this in relation to both administrative and advisory capacity. Section 5.4 addresses proposals for the reduction in administrative burdens for beneficiaries.

5.2 Horizontal Principles

5.2.1 *Equal Opportunities and Discrimination Prevention*

The horizontal principles of equal opportunities and discrimination prevention receive relatively little discussion in RDP documents, and while they probably did not feature notably in the consultation processes or in SWOT and Needs analyses, there may be some merit in recording the extent to which they did or did not. Beyond this however there is nevertheless much in the proposals that provides reassurance regarding these horizontal principles.

At the level of the overall Programme, equality bodies and advocacy groups were included among stakeholders invited to participate in consultative events and processes during the Programme's preparatory phases. In addition there is a commitment to have such bodies represented on the Programme Monitoring Committee. At the level of individual Measures, there is a clear anti-discrimination principle that runs across all Measures in their targeting and delivery proposals. Schemes will be open to all applicants, irrespective of gender, ability, or other characteristics, and equality of treatment and impartiality are also put forward as core principles to be upheld in setting selection criteria in implementing individual Measures, whether they are through open tender procedures, through application processes, or through other means.

While these are each important and commendable features, it is also the case that there is little specific mention of any proposals to actively promote gender equality issues within the Programme's scope or areas of influence, and that the only area of positive discrimination in the Programme is in relation to age (where young farmers are specifically targeted in various contexts). LEADER has a role to play in supporting and promoting the role and contribution of women in agriculture and rural development, as well as the social inclusion of all groups that may be excluded or discriminated against. There should also be safeguards within the LEADER model to ensure that it supports full accessibility for all in the development projects it financially supports. While positive discrimination towards female applicants is probably not appropriate at the level of delivery of non-LEADER projects, however the networking of female farmers or the exploration of means of encouraging female participation in agriculture may be a worthwhile role of the NRN.

5.2.2 Sustainable Development

The principle of sustainable development is endemic within the Programme. The more sustainable development of the agriculture sector lies at the Programme's very core and represents its basic rationale and raison d'être, and is a principal objective of the Programme, of the Priorities it seeks to address and of the clear majority of the Measures through which it will do so. There is little obvious means by which the principle of sustainable development could be further enshrined.

5.3 Human and Administrative Capacity

5.3.1 Administrative Capacity

The movement to systems of online application processes, and the electronic capture of administrative and monitoring data, is intended and will be a new, ambitious departure from past administrative methods with the potential to enhance data availability and accessibility substantially as well as create significant administrative efficiencies. It will however necessitate close co-ordination and planning across all relevant implementing Divisions of DAFM both at the stage of system design and testing, and at implementation stages themselves. The success of the new approach will also depend on ease of use by applicants or their agents/advisors. Co-ordination will be needed both in ensuring all administrative data is appropriately sought and captured, but also that all monitoring and evaluation data is clearly defined at the earliest possible stage and its capture is also ensured. Ongoing flexibility and adaptability of the systems established will also be important to ensure they meet changing needs as the Programme and Measures evolve.

The greatest risk in this area is launching Schemes or Measures prior to the data systems being capable and ready to administer them, which has the potential to limit data capture at the critical application stage, as well as to create substantial retrospective administration and processing work.

5.3.2 Advisory Capacity

There is a clear recognition in the Programme of the increasingly important role to be played by agricultural advisors in the effective delivery of the Programme and its ultimate success. The inclusion therefore of a distinct Measure aimed at ensuring their appropriate training and professional development is an important and welcome feature of the Programme. Steps will need to be taken to ensure advisors are in sufficient number and are sufficiently capable to fulfil their numerous roles in effective delivery of Measures and Schemes, and appropriate mechanisms put in place to monitor and report on this.

5.3.3 LEADER Implementation

The nature and role of the new LCDCs is crucial to the implementation arrangements regarding LEADER in the new period (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.8 above). The working through of the implications of this new structure, including its implications for the existing LAGs, has already taken a large amount of administrative time in the intervening period.⁴ This has, perhaps, also somewhat overshadowed the equally important topic of the substance of the new LEADER Programme. While well developed, these new arrangements are still being finalised at the time of the drafting of the Ex Ante Evaluation.

⁴ See Alignment of Local Government and Local Development, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, *Guidelines for Establishment of Local Community Development Committees*, April 2014.

The new arrangements as we understand them are essentially that:

- a) A call for expressions of interest from candidates to be the LAGs in the next period will issue in July 2014. The LCDC or the local authority on its behalf will be eligible to apply, as will other organisations who can meet the relevant criteria including the existing Local Development Companies (i.e. the existing LAGs);
- b) The criteria will require both a track record in delivering LEADER-type programmes as well as a substantial financial partner, so it is hoped this will encourage the local authorities and the existing LAGs to co-operate on joint county-level proposals. However, both parties will be free to take alternative approaches should they wish;
- c) Those who are successful at the first stage will receive support to submit full proposals in October 2014 to demonstrate their ability to be a LAG to deliver the community elements of the local Economic and Community Plan for the county;
- d) The economic element of the Plan will be prepared separately under the leadership of the local authority, or of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO). This obviously raises some issues about the economic role of LCDCs, of LEADER and of LAGs. One of these Plans (Economic and Community Plan or Community Plan) will then constitute the LDS for LEADER Plan purposes, although we are not clear which one.

5.4 Administrative Burden

The Programme contains a number of commitments aimed at reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries, which the evaluators would support. These include:

- the move to online application processes, mentioned above;
- establishing consistent and common features of application forms or information requirements, including with regard to lay outs, language and definitions;
- establishing best practices across Measures in terms of the communication of Measures launches, requirements and processes.

As with other implementation objectives, there should be methods by which administrative burdens continue to be gauged and further enhancements explored and delivered as Measures go through their various implementation phases.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This Section presents the overall conclusions of the ex-ante evaluation, before summarising its recommendations.

6.2 Evaluation Conclusions

Overall Conclusions

The ex-ante evaluation is broadly supportive of the emerging proposals regarding the aims, focus, Priorities and financial balance of the draft 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP) in Ireland. It has emerged from a strong and considered assessment of the agricultural and rural context, and from a detailed and objective examination of needs, both general and also specifically in relation to the six areas identified as Union Priorities for rural development in the Regulation.

Entering the next multiannual programming period, overriding Priorities for Ireland's agricultural and rural economy are to maximise their delivery of employment, output and exports so as to spearhead indigenously-driven economic recovery following the economic crisis and recession, to increase the environmental efficiency and sustainability of agriculture and reduce its impact on natural resources and biodiversity, to increase the value added of the sector through enhancing research, shared knowledge and supply structures, and to drive socio-economic development and enhanced quality of life in rural areas. These are all appropriately reflected in the draft Programme's Priorities and intervention proposals, and through the identification of specific needs, opportunities and proposed responses that give detailed effect to these strategic goals.

In its specific proposals on EAFRD-supported interventions, the emerging Programme responds in a balanced way to these overriding aims, and to the Union Priorities and Focus Areas. In several respects it does so through restructured and/or remodelled versions of previous interventions modified to reflect contemporary needs and challenges, and in others through showing a commendable appetite for delivering new schemes and interventions appropriate for current and emerging needs. In both sets of cases a focus on targeted delivery, on ongoing monitoring and evaluation that feeds back into design and delivery, on flexibility, on ambition in achievement and on value for money will ensure overall Programme effectiveness and long-standing achievements. In some of these areas, including the establishment of performance measurement and monitoring frameworks, in evaluation planning, and in target setting, much important preparatory and planning work is still not yet complete.

Contribution to Europe 2020

The emerging Programme has the capacity to make a strong contribution to Europe 2020 goals and targets. Its responsiveness to the overriding Priorities and needs it has identified in a specific Irish context, aligns it quite distinctively with the overriding Europe 2020 Priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and it incorporates interventions and actions that will drive each of these Priorities both individually and collectively.

Among Europe 2020 targets it stands to contribute most in respect of employment, in climate change and energy efficiency, and to a lesser extent, to poverty reduction and social inclusion. The potential for direct and indirect employment creation and retention arises in supporting on-farm efficiency through investment support, as well as through the targeted support of collaborative farming, knowledge enhancement, quality schemes, sectoral supports and Measures to capture opportunities in niche markets.

The promotion of agricultural practices that protect and improve the environment, and seek to support the realisation of water quality, climate change and biodiversity objectives are to feature prominently within the Programme's interventions and scope of influence. Positive enhancements to the efficiency and value added of primary production also have the scope to support wider rural development, to increase living standards within and outside the farming community, and together with the job creation, economic diversification, and community development potential impacts of the LEADER model, can support reduced rural poverty, isolation, social exclusion and emigration. Fulfilling these strong potential impacts on Europe 2020 targets and Priorities calls much more for a strong and clear focus on ensuring effectiveness than any rePrioritisation or rebalancing of proposed interventions.

Coherence of Programme

Reflecting the range and diversity of the Union's Priorities for rural development as set out in the EAFRD Regulation, the draft RDP comprises a wide and diverse scope of activity that includes, inter alia, on-farm capital investment, the training of agricultural advisors, to off-farm employment creation, to promoting environmentally-friendly farming practices. Reasonably strong internal coherence is nevertheless evident in that all activities contribute to overriding Priorities that are consistent with EU goals as well as reflective of national and sectoral needs. Furthermore, while seemingly diverse, many Measures share common goals and contribute quite directly to common policy Priorities, albeit through different channels and means. Examples include the resource efficiency goal supported simultaneously by the proposed bioenergy scheme and the agri-environment and climate scheme, or the goal of enhancing farm viability and competitiveness supported simultaneously through on-farm investments, supports for collaborative farming, Knowledge Transfer and numerous other proposed interventions.

Coherence with wider EU and national instruments and policies is also evident in the proposals. As well as with Europe 2020 as described, there is a degree of consistency and complementarity with CAP Pillar I assured through its co-ordinated but differentiated regulatory framework. Actions and supports are also clearly supportive of the EU's Climate Action policy framework for 2030 climate and energy targets. At national level the Programme dovetails with the "smart, green, growth" vision and goals of the Food Harvest 2020 strategy, the most relevant national strategy that will be pursued simultaneously.

Consistency of Financial Allocations with Results Sought

The evaluation supports the general balance of financial allocations in the emerging proposals. While pre-defined regulatory concentrations are met and in some respects exceeded, reaching appropriate scales, balancing provision with likely uptake, ensuring participation, and maximising impact are all important considerations that have been taken into account in proposing Measure allocations. Flexibility in numerous financial respects will be important to design into the Programme to ensure an appropriate balance and focus is maintained. The flexibility to re-allocate away from activities that are found to be ineffective will be important, as will be that to increase supports for effective actions. An ability to rebalance or re-programme in the face of changing needs, economic developments or policy Priorities will also be important, as will be the scope to enhance elements that prove successful through raised exchequer co-financing should national budgetary conditions improve significantly over the life of the programme.

6.3 Recommendations

Overall Programme Recommendations

- some additional observations on gender equality and anti-discrimination should be incorporated into the SWOT and Needs analyses, even where only to observe their degree of relevance or non-relevance, the extent to which they arose in consultations, or the degree to which they feature as specific challenges in any areas;
- some further discussion or analysis of the following should be integrated into the SWOT and Needs analyses where possible:
 - animal health and welfare;
 - the training of agricultural advisors;
 - on-farm investment specifically in the dairy sector, possibly to include data on farm borrowings and investments from the National Farm Survey;
 - farm viability in designated areas of natural constraint;
 - organic farming.
- given the importance of the issue of land mobility and the extent to which the low levels of mobility hamper structural development and growth within the sector, provision should be made for a major study to investigate the factors which influence the land market in Ireland, how it varies over time and in particular why the scale of land market activity is at such a low level. This study should inform future policy development;
- for the same reason, where possible existing Measures in the Programme should address the structural issues in agriculture wherever possible and appropriate (see Measure recommendations);
- include in the indicator plan some indicators and targets for schemes that don't yet have any (e.g. Beef Data and Genomics);
- develop a detailed and specific evaluation plan at an early stage, setting out plans for the evaluation of individual Measures, of individual themes, of progress under specific Priorities, or other dimensions of the

Programme and its implementation. The plan should incorporate result and impact indicators and targets where possible, albeit outside the scope of the formal programme indicator plan and the performance framework;

- maintain financial flexibility and re-allocate where appropriate later (e.g. at Mid-term stage) based on close monitoring of the effectiveness of Measures;
- a review of the capacity and training needs of the agri-food and rural development advisory services to cope with the multiple, parallel demands of the OP as a whole should be undertaken to identify any constraints that might hamper OP implementation and actions that might need to be undertaken
- while there are various references to technical assistance in the draft RDP documentation provided, some composite statement should be made regarding of the strategic purpose to which the Technical Assistance resources will be put, and the ways in which it will support effective delivery and implementation.

Measure-Specific Recommendations

GLAS / GLAS +

- to the extent possible distinguish and favour young farmers in competitive processes where the Scheme is oversubscribed;
- monitor closely how uptake and participation is likely to support the activities required to support Ireland's compliance with obligations under the Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Nitrates Directives, and ensure there is flexibility to adjust the implementation approach where required;

Organic Farming Scheme

- establish a programme target for the percentage of national UAA under organic production that reflects the financial provisions included in the RDP for this Measure;

Locally led targeted Agri-Environment Schemes

- establish and develop the proposals for implementation structures for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel project(s), and the estimated timelines and delivery milestones for planning and implementation of all activities under this Measure;

Areas of Natural Constraint Measure (including support for island farmers)

- ensure that minimum stocking requirements apply to the whole farm in order to realise the full environmental benefits of the Scheme;

TAMS II

- ensure all indicators to be required (whether they form part of the performance framework, wider indicator plan, or evaluation plan and preparation) are established and confirmed prior to any roll out, so application details and requirements can reflect them;

BioEnergy

- additional detail should be provided in relation to the additional premium payment proposed in the Measure design process;
- further details should be provided on the basis for target setting and uptake levels anticipated given the underdeveloped market for indigenously-produced biomass;

Knowledge Transfer Groups

- discuss the requirement for only individual facilitators with the Commission, which it seems is very administratively intensive;
- ensure that topics relevant to the restructuring of agriculture are included in the agenda of the menu of potential Discussion Groups.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Agricultural Advisors

- ensure that a sufficiently broad range of disciplines to meet the needs of the Knowledge Transfer Measures is reflected in the Continued Professional Development training under the Measure, in particular softer skills, e.g. farm succession, facilitation, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- undertake a an OP wide assessment of the capacity and needs, including training needs, of the agricultural and rural development advisory services (see also under Programme Recommendations)

Targeted Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Service

- improve Measure text in relation to some features, e.g. references to “training of trainers”, and vagueness in relation to monitoring and evaluation;
- sharpen the boundaries between this and other Knowledge Transfer Measures, particularly regarding training of veterinarians;
- consider removing the reference to “welfare” from the Measure title and description.

LEADER

- clarify the intended content of the social inclusion theme under LEADER and how this differs or relates to the existing social inclusion activities of local authorities on the one hand, and of the local partnership companies (the existing LAGs) on the other;
- clarify the role of the LCDC and of the LAG in relation to the economy and enterprise as there seem to be inconsistencies about this;
- document the policy desirability and the means by which access to appropriate expertise in the existing LAGs can be retained in the new RDP;
- clarify how the food Measures are to be delivered using the LEADER approach;
- establish more specific and clear objectives for the Measure to be delivered under the LEADER model;
- a detailed LEADER Measure Implementation Plan should be prepared prior to OP commencement and presented to the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee.

Thematic Table of GLAS Commitments (Formerly ‘Annex 2’)

Commitment	Sub-Measure	Type of Operation/Specified Actions	Baseline	Rate and Basis for Payment <i>(rates converted to per/ha basis as required)</i>
Commitments addressing Preservation of Wild Flora and Fauna including farmed Natura 2000 land				
Commonages		<p>Conservation and regeneration of commonage land.</p> <p>Production of a Sustainable Management Plan for the commonage by a trained agronomist professional.</p> <p>Implement the management plan in co-operation with other commonage shareholders.</p> <p>Comply with grazing plan annually.</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied.</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater. <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland)</i></p> <p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover.</p> <p>GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land:</p> <p>Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion;</p> <p>Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil;</p> <p>Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils;</p> <p>Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils.</p>	<p>€120/ha.</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost to shareholders of engaging a professional advisor to prepare a Commonage Management Plan (CMP) for all the land farmed in common (where the commonage is greater than 10 hectares in area) and implementation of the plan for a minimum period of five years. Implementation of the CMP requires co-operation among shareholders in the delivery of a sustainable grazing regime on the common land and environmental management of areas of the commonage ineligible under the Basic Payment Scheme under Pillar 1.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u></p> <p>Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions:</p> <p>Rare breeds is the only other action allowed on Commonages.</p>

			<p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features. In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains.</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>SMR 7: Register and identify with ear tags all bovine animals</p> <p>SMR 8: Register and identify with ear tags ovine & caprine animals</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Farmers farm individually with no requirement to maintain specific animal numbers on the commonage.</p>	
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<p>Farmland habitat – privately owned Natura sites</p>		<p>Production of a Sustainable Management Plan by a trained agronomist in order to enhance the conservation status of the site. Implement management plan. Comply with grazing plan annually</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied.GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i> GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover AND GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils. GAEC 7: Retain landscape features In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. .</p>	<p>€79/ha Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This action can be paid as Low Input Permanent Pasture/Traditional Hay Meadow where the habitat can be categorised by the advisor as delivering these actions. Where the Natura site and the farmland bird overlap on the same parcel payment will be made at the farmland bird rate.</p> <p>The payment is based on the beneficiary employing a professional advisor to prepare a sustainable management plan for the NATURA 2000 site. This plan must set appropriate stocking levels where applicable and a grazing/land management plan sympathetic to the site. The farmer must adapt farm management practices to implement the plan for a minimum period of five years.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p><u>Combination with other actions</u> Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the annex 11 threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary in terms of biodiversity.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - /sand) when this is delivered with the farmland habitat the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II</p>
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			<p>Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Full mandatory management plans are not applied. Instead, farmers are issued with lists of potentially damaging activities which require consent. The list of actions is included in The Birds and Habitats (2011) Regulations No requirement on farmers to apply management regimes which require <u>additional effort</u>, just a requirement to seek <u>consent</u>.</p>	<p>threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
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<p>Farmland Birds</p>	<p>Breeding Waders</p>	<p>To promote the maintenance of permanent pasture to benefit Breeding Waders, this is also beneficial to grassland flora and fauna. Maintain land free from invasive species and encroachment of scrub</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses where no fertilisers are applied GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover AND GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils. GAEC 7: Retain landscape features. In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable. SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p>	<p>€365/ha Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the income forgone in the production of a sward cover by rotational grazing to allow for a mosaic of short, medium and tall vegetation cover to develop. The production of this type of sward has a low input requirement. Machinery operations (including topping) cannot be carried out between specified dates Fertilisers and/or other chemicals are not permitted. No silage or hay can be cut from parcels and reseeded of parcels is not allowed.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex 11 threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with the farmland habitat the Annex II threshold is respected.</p>
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			<p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: There is no requirement to proactively create new habitat for various bird species.</p>	<p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
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Farmland Birds (Cont.)	Chough	To promote the creation and maintenance of suitable habitat for the Chough for nesting and foraging	As Above	<p>€365/ha Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost and income forgone in the production of a sward cover suitable for the Chough. The production of this type of sward has a low input requirement . An appropriate grazing plan to maintain a tightly grazed short sward throughout the year must be followed and topping, rolling and cutting are not permitted between the dates as set out in the specification Where a parcel is cut for silage/hay, only one cut can be taken per year. Heather, bracken and scrub where present must be controlled but only where applicable and between the annual dates as set out in the specification The use of Pesticides is not permitted except for the control of noxious weeds and invasive species.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex 11 threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the chough the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
	Corncrake	Create and maintain cover for the corncrake when they arrive from Africa in late spring/summer and to	As Above	<p>€364/ha Transaction Cost: No</p>

		hide in when meadows are mown in late summer/autumn.		<p>The payment is based on the income forgone in the production of a suitable cover. The production of this type of sward has a low input requirement. Grazing, mowing, topping and/or other field operations requiring the use of machinery are not permitted between the annual dates as set out in the specification.</p> <p>The meadows must be mown annually except when weather conditions make this impossible.</p> <p>Cover areas must exist within the parcel either by maintaining an area of tall herb vegetation in spring and late summer of at least 0.1 hectare for every 2 hectares of meadow, or by leaving a 1.8 metre margin along two headlands when cutting the meadow.</p> <p><u>Annex II of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 –Article 28(8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex 11 threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat- sand) when this is delivered with the corncrake the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
	Geese & Swans	To promote grass sward development suitable as foraging habitat for overwintering geese and	As Above	€205/ha Transaction Cost: No

		swans		<p>The payment is based on income forgone in the production of a suitable grass sward. Parcels must be closed off from livestock from the dates as set out in the specification of the following year. Parcels that are grazed annually by Geese and/or Swans must be maintained in grass.</p> <p><u>Annex II of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28(8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the geese and swans the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Farmland Birds (Cont.)	Grey Partridge	To establish a Wild Bird Cover Mix for feed and shelter for Grey Partridge.	As Above	<p>€440/ha ** (€1.10X400m) Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment</p>

				<p>element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost and income forgone in establishing a 12 metre grass/cereal/kale margin along a full length of an existing field or LPIS parcel boundary. The production of this margin has a low input requirement After the margin has been successfully established, the use of pesticides is not permitted; except for the spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds. The margin must be fenced off and stock-proof from the time it is sown. The margin must be managed for the full duration of the contract.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>While the threshold is exceeded with the Bee habitat -sand the conservation of the solitary bee is an important environmental action for reasons of biodiversity and therefore the excess is justified.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading:.. where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Farmland Birds (Cont.)	Hen Harrier	To promote the creation and maintenance of suitable habitat for the hen harrier for nesting and foraging	As Above	<p>€370/ha Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost and income forgone in the production of a suitable sward. The production of this type of sward has a low input requirement Parcels that Hen Harriers have traditionally occupied must be maintained in grass and not reseeded. Grazing practices that promote and maintain the development of tall</p>

			<p>and tussock vegetation (>10cm high) throughout the parcel should be followed. The parcels cannot be grazed intensively by sheep. Noxious and invasive weeds must be controlled by spot spraying or mechanically.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Coppicing and laying of hedgerows, traditional dry stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the hen harrier action the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
	Twite A: Field Option	Extensively manage grassland, semi natural/semi improved grassland to conserve twite	<p>€375/ha</p> <p>Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>The payment is based on income forgone in the production of a suitable sward. The production of this type of sward has a low input requirement. Where the parcel is grazed, approximately 50% of the field should be grazed between specified dates with the other approximately 50% grazed between alternative specified dates annually. Mowing cannot be undertaken between the dates as set out in the specifications annually. Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds.</p>

				<p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions Traditional stone walls and protection of water courses from bovines are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with the Twite A the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
	Twite B: Field Margin Option	Create a margin within fields for Twite to feed and forage on	As Above	<p>€600/ha (0.84 x 100m) Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost and income forgone in establishing a 12m wide margin. The margin must be established using a specific seed mix between the annual dates as set out in the specification the margin must be fenced off .After the date as set out in the specification, the margin must be grazed and/or mown. If</p>

				<p>mown, all cuttings must be removed. Additional establishment actions may be required in subsequent years to ensure the presence of appropriate seeding species within the margin.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The threshold of €450/ha is exceeded, this is justified because Twite B is a red listed bird of conservation in Ireland with recent data indicating a decline in numbers. The objective of the action in GLAS is to maintain habitats for Twite birds during the breeding and wintering season. In order to prevent a decline in the number of breeding pairs a margin of this length is required.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Protection of water courses from bovines is delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the Twite B the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
<p>Farmland Birds (Cont.)</p>	<p>Twite C: Winter Feeding Option</p>	<p>Sow a seed crop mix that provides winter food sources for Twite.</p>	<p>As Above but also</p> <p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover</p>	<p>€900/ha Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost and income forgone in the production of a Twite seed mix food crop. The crop mix can be sown either annually or bi-annually in springtime, requires input reduction in establishing the crop and must remain in place until the date as set out in the specification. No harvesting can take place.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The threshold of €450 is exceeded. This is justified on environmental grounds as the Twite is facing extreme pressure in Ireland and this action is aimed at addressing its decline. It is fully supported by Birdwatch Ireland and the National Parks & Wildlife</p>

				<p>Service. The costs have been independently verified.</p> <p>Combination with other actions Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the Twite C the threshold is exceeded, This is justified on environmental grounds because bee habitats are under threat from farming practices and combining this with a bird action represents a good biodiversity package.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Commitments addressing the Protection of Genetic Resources in Danger of being lost				
Rare Breeds – Animal Genetic Resources		<p>Increase populations of local animals in danger of being lost to farming; Contribute to long term survival of breeds; Rear and mate herbivore of specific native breeds. Be a member of the approved breed society. Register offspring with the relevant breed society. Maintain monthly records</p>	<p>SMR 7: Register and identify with ear tags all bovine animals SMR 8: Register and identify with ear tags ovine & caprine animals</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: There is no requirement on farmers to keep specific rare breeds of animals in danger of being lost to farming.</p>	<p>€200/unit Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of registering animals with a recognised Breed Society, over and above what is required for other breeds, as well as maintaining additional records of the breeds concerned. Also included is income foregone due to the uneconomic nature of the breeds concerned. The list of breeds eligible for support is included in the GLAS Specification document.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €200 per livestock unit is respected .</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Combining with other area based actions is allowed under Annex II</p>
Traditional Orchards		<p>Establish non-commercial orchard with traditional old Irish varieties selected</p>	<p>No GAEC or Cross Compliance requirements. Normal Farming Practice:</p>	<p>€121.60/ha** (€12.16 x 10 trees) Transaction Cost: No</p>

		from a published list; on vigorous rootstocks.	Does not include the planting of orchards of gene pools in danger of being lost.	<p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of establishing a traditional orchard of top fruit trees. Trees must be supported and must be protected from livestock. Fertiliser or lime cannot be broadcast throughout the orchard. Pesticides are not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds. The list of species eligible for support is included in the GLAS Specification document .</p> <p><i>Further detail on Gene Pool conservation on www.seedsaversireland.ie</i></p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Threshold of €450 is respected where action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A</p>
Commitments addressing Climate Change				
Environmental Establishment of Fallow Land		To manage fallow plots for maximum benefit of birds and other species by establishment and maintenance of a cover crop.	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note: GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland)</i></p> <p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover</p> <p>GAEC 5: Limit erosion in</p>	<p>€750/ha Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>Where the area under GLAS is used as an Ecological Focus Area the appropriate reduction in the agri-environment payment will be made</p> <p>The payment is based on income forgone and the additional cost of establishing a fallow area through sowing a grass seed mix containing at least 2 tussock grasses. Use of fertilisers (chemical or organic) or grazing by livestock is not permitted. The parcel must be mown or mulched at least once per year but not between the annual dates as set out in the specification.. Offtakes are not permitted.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u></p>

			<p>management of land. Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion;</p> <p>Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil;</p> <p>Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils;</p> <p>Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils.</p> <p>GAEC 6: Maintain soil organic matter</p> <p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. .</p> <p>Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: is to manage land to optimise agricultural output.</p>	<p>Threshold of €900 is respected because this is a specialised perennial crop which must remain in place for the duration of the contract.</p> <p>Combination with other actions:</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are of complementary environmental value to the action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with the Environmental Management of Fallow Land the threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Low-Emission Slurry Spreading	Use of technology in slurry spreading to reduce emissions, when spreading all slurry produced and imported on farm.	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses where no fertilisers are applied.</p> <p><i>(note:GAEC 1 is subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates</i></p>	<p>€7.08/ha *</p> <p>(€1.20 X 5.9 m3)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of using new technologies for the</p>	

			<p><i>Directive in Ireland</i> SMR 1: Respect where no fertilisers are applied Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Use of high trajectory spreading equipment.</p>	<p>spreading of slurry implemented on the holding.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Low-emission slurry spreading can be delivered with area-based actions. Where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Minimum Tillage		Support for the use of minimum tillage practices in crop production.	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i> GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover AND GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing</p>	<p>€40/ha Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of acquiring specialist advice to use this technology and manage crops thereafter.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: This may be delivered with Catch Crops. Research has shown that there is an additive environmental value in delivering these two actions together.</p> <p>Traditional dry stone walls, coppicing and laying of hedgerows are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and have a proven environmental value.</p>

			<p>likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils. GAEC 7: Retain landscape features In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains . SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Primary cultivation inverting the soil</p>	<p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with minimum tillage or in combination with catch crops the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Catch Crops		<p>Tilling to a management prescription which involves; Very light tilling of soil to prepare seedbed; establish a green cover; annual rotation may take place for the duration of the contract subject to the annual establishment of a green cover area at least equal to the area declared in year one.</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i> GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover</p>	<p>€155/ha</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost in sowing a green cover crop annually..The crop must be sown by the date as set out in the specification and under sowing or sowing grass crops is not permitted. The crop must remain in place until at least the y the annual date as set out in the specification.</p> <p>Please see Section 8.1 of the RDP for details in relation to GLAS actions and equivalence for the purpose of greening requirements under Pillar 1.</p>

			<p>AND</p> <p>GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils.</p> <p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Establish by natural regeneration and not by sowing a crop</p>	<p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: This may be delivered with Minimum Tillage. Research has shown that there is an additive environmental value in delivering these two actions together.</p> <p>Traditional dry stone walls, coppicing and laying of hedgerows are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and have a proven environmental value.</p> <p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with catch crops or in combination with minimum tillage the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
Commitments addressing the Protection of Water				
Protection of Water Courses		Prevent bovine access to water courses.	GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are	€300/ha - ** (€1.50 X 200m) Transaction Cost: No

			<p>applied</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i></p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 7: Register and identify with ear tags all bovine animals</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Does not include the fencing of the complete river bank</p>	<p>The payment is based on the additional cost of maintaining a fence along watercourse(s) on owned and leased lands for the duration of the GLAS contract. Livestock drinking points are not permitted. An alternative water supply must be provided for livestock. There is no establishment payment for the fence.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Water quality retention and improvement is a key objective of GLAS. Areas of high status water have been identified on holdings and the farmer must address these, wherever they occur. In the absence of these a vulnerable water site may have to be protected, or a general action to protect other watercourses may be chosen. Therefore this action can be delivered in combination with all of the Farmland Birds actions, the Farmland Habitat action, Low-Input Permanent Pasture and Traditional Hay Meadow. As it is a linear boundary action the threshold for Annex II in all of these cases is respected.</p>
Riparian Margins		<p>Creation of a permanently fenced margin adjacent to identified watercourses. This land cannot be used for agricultural production, but must be maintained annually. Fence to prohibit animal access.</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i></p>	<p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rates shown below are the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on income forgone and the cost of establishing and maintaining a 3, 6, 10 or 30m riparian margin, over and above the 2m buffer required under GAEC. Margin must be fenced off to prevent livestock access and with machinery access for management. Use of fertilisers or pesticides is not permitted, except for spot treatment of noxious and invasive weeds. Vegetation must be controlled so that it does not close across the channel canopy. Off takes are allowed</p>

			<p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover AND GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils. GAEC 7: Retain landscape features. In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Maximise agricultural output on the parcel while respecting the 2m Pillar 1 requirement</p>	
		3 metre wide uncultivated	As Above	€48 – 3m **

RM (Cont)	strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost.		<p>(0.24 X 200m) Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A</p> <p>€108/ha - 6m ** (€0.54 X 200m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A</p>
	6 metre wide uncultivated strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost.		<p>€188/ha – 10m ** Transaction Cost: Yes</p>
	10 metre wide uncultivated strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost.		

		<p>30 metre wide uncultivated strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost</p>		<p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A.</p> <p>€584 – 30m ** (€2.92 X 200m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The threshold of €450/ha is exceeded this is justified because water quality is a central priority in the GLAS Scheme. These 30m margins protect the watercourse from grazing livestock which reduces pollution and degradation.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A.</p>
<p align="center">Commitments addressing Food and Habitat needs of Farmland Birds with additional Landscape and Biodiversity benefits</p>				

Wild Bird Cover		Establish on a suitable LPIS parcel a low-input arable crop to provide cover and winter food source for farmland birds.	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied.</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note: GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland)</i></p> <p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover</p> <p>AND</p> <p>GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils.</p> <p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from</p>	<p>€900/ha Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>Where the area under GLAS is used as an Ecological Focus Area the appropriate reduction in the agri-environment payment will be made</p> <p>The payment is based on income foregone and the additional cost of establishing a wild bird cover by sowing a suitable seed mix as winter food for farmland birds. Crop must be sown in Spring, requires input reduction in establishing the crop and must remain in situ until dates in the following year as set out in the specification. No harvesting can take place.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The threshold of €450 is exceeded. This is justified on environmental grounds as lowland farm birds in Ireland are facing extreme pressures in and this action is aimed at addressing their decline. It is fully supported by Birdwatch Ireland and the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The costs have been independently verified.</p> <p>Combination with other actions Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and are complementary to the bird action.</p> <p>Bee (habitat - sand) when this is delivered with Wild Bird Cover the threshold is exceeded, This is justified on environmental grounds because bee habitats are under threat from farming practices and combining this with a bird action represents a good biodiversity package.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
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			<p>agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Does not include growing a seed crop for winter feed for farmland birds</p>	
Coppicing Hedgerows		Coppicing of existing hedgerows	<p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>GAEC: No requirements.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Retain existing hedgerows with no requirement for this type of management intervention. Where hedgerow is designated a landscape feature it must be retained under GAEC 7.</p>	<p>€88/ha (€0.88 X 100m)* Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of rejuvenating hedgerows by means of coppicing. Coppicing must be carried out by cutting the stem to less than 15cm from the ground level. Infilling of gaps must be undertaken. All newly coppiced hedges must be protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is coppiced.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Coppicing is delivered with certain area based actions but as it is a linear boundary</p>

			<p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p>	<p>action Annex II threshold is always respected .</p>
Laying Hedgerows		Laying of existing hedgerows	<p>GAEC: No requirement.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Retain existing hedgerows and light trimming to stop encroachment with no requirement for this type of management intervention. Where hedgerow is designated a landscape feature it must be retained under GAEC 7.</p>	<p>€238 (€2.38 X 100m)*</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of rejuvenating hedgerows by means of laying. Laying cannot be carried out using heavy machinery and infilling must be carried out if gaps are present in the hedgerow that will not be filled by re-growth from the laid hedgerow. Infilling of gaps must be undertaken. All newly laid hedges must be protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is laid.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Laying is delivered with certain area based actions but as it is a linear boundary action Annex II threshold is always respected</p>
Planting a Grove of Native Trees		Planting and maintenance of native trees in accordance with a specification, with	<p>No GAEC requirement.</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Does not include the planting</p>	<p>€189 (€0.42 x 450 whips)**</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p>

		particular emphasis on diversity.	of groves of native trees	<p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost of establishing and maintaining a grove of native trees with a minimum of 0.05 ha with 250 whips and maximum area of 0.09 ha with 450 whips. Whips must be protected from livestock from the time of planting until the end of the contract.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when this action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A</p>
Planting New Hedgerows		To establish new hedgerows on farms and thereby increase biodiversity and enhance the visual landscape.	<p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>GAEC: No requirement..</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: Does not include the planting of new additional hedgerows.</p>	<p>€790 /ha (€3.95 X 200)**</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>Where the area under GLAS is used as an Ecological Focus Area the appropriate reduction in the agri-environment payment will be made</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on income foregone and the cost of establishing an additional new hedgerow on the farm. All newly planted hedgerows must be protected from livestock, from the time the hedge is planted. Grass and weeds must be controlled and plants must be managed to ensure a dense hedgerow establishes.</p> <p>Where an existing hedgerow landscape feature is removed and replaced elsewhere on the holding the replacement hedgerow forms part of the baseline requirement and will not be eligible for support under GLAS</p>

				<p>Failed or dead plants must be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is exceeded. This is justified on the grounds that hedgerows deliver proven biodiversity and landscape benefits, providing important wildlife habitats and giving the Irish countryside its distinctive character.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: N/A</p>
Commitments addressing Biodiversity with Cross Priority Benefits				
Low-Input Permanent Pasture		<p>Maintaining low-input permanent pasture via prescribed management prescription and practices; Specific grazing regime to preserve the habitat; topping is only permitted during specified periods.</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note: GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland)</i> GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry</p>	<p>€314/ha Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>The payment is based on maintaining suitable pasture that contains a minimum of four grass species (excluding Perennial/Italian Ryegrass) and a minimum of three other non-grass plant species. The production of this type of pasture has a low input requirement. All species must be reasonably dispersed throughout the parcel The sward must be maintained by grazing. There must be a grazing enterprise of owned livestock on the holding.</p> <p>No mowing or topping can take place between the annual dates as set out in the specification.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls, protection of water courses from bovines, coppicing and laying of hedgerows are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the</p>

			<p>practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils.</p> <p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features. In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>SMR 7: Register and identify with ear tags all bovine animals</p> <p>SMR 8: Register and identify with ear tags ovine & caprine animals</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: To optimise production of fodder resulting in reduced species diversity in the sward.</p>	<p>landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and have proven biodiversity value..</p> <p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with Low-Input Permanent Pasture the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
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<p>Traditional Hay Meadow</p>		<p>Enhancement of the conservation value and the continuation of traditional farming practice for traditional hay meadows.</p>	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note:GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland</i> GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land Ensure there are no unsown finely tilled fields susceptible to erosion; Minimise poaching where animals are outwintered and avoid liquification of soil; Protect against overgrazing likely to lead to soil erosion particularly on sandy or high organic soils; Maintain proper husbandry practices to protect against erosion especially on sloping soils. GAEC 7: Retain landscape features. In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. Fertilisers, particularly organic</p>	<p>€315/ha</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on creating a Traditional Hay Meadow. The meadow must contain a minimum of three grass species (excluding Ryegrasses) that are widely dispersed throughout the LPIS parcel. The production of this type of meadow has a low input requirement. Where Ryegrasses are present, they must not occupy more than 50% of the sward. Meadows must be mown on or after the dates as set out in the specification. .</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone walls, protection of water courses from bovines, coppicing and laying of hedgerows are delivered on a linear boundary therefore the Annex threshold is respected.</p> <p>Protection of Archaeological Monuments (grassland): these are attributes in the landscape and there is no choice as to where this action can be delivered. It involves the management of vegetation around the archaeological monument.</p> <p>Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes: These are justified in the context of the Annex II threshold as they are delivered on a tree or a post and have proven biodiversity value.</p> <p>Bee (habitats - sand) when this is delivered with Traditional Hay Meadow the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Low-emission slurry spreading: where this results in the Annex II threshold being exceeded, this is justified on environmental grounds as there are proven benefits to using this technology instead of high trajectory spreading equipment. Aim is to encourage uptake as very low penetration in Ireland.</p>
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			<p>fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>SMR 7: Register and identify with ear tags all bovine animals</p> <p>SMR 8: Register and identify with ear tags ovine & caprine animals</p> <p>Normal Farming Practice: To optimise production of fodder resulting in reduced species diversity in the sward.</p>	
Arable Grass Margins		Create a arable grass margin around the periphery of arable fields	<p>GAEC 1: establish a 2m buffer along any watercourses within which no fertilisers are applied.</p> <p>GAEC 3: Protect ground water against pollution – no direct discharge into groundwater <i>(note: GAEC 1 & 3 are subsumed into SMR 1 in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Ireland)</i></p>	<p>The payment is based on income forgone and the additional cost of establishing a 3, 4 or 6 metre grass margin over and above the 2m buffer required under GAEC. A grass seed mix containing at least two tussock grass species must be sown and fertiliser or lime cannot be applied. Pesticides cannot be applied except for the spot treatment of noxious and/or invasive weeds.</p> <p>The margin must be mulched, mown or grazed annually but not between the dates as set out in the specification.. Offtakes are permitted</p> <p>Where the area under GLAS is used as an Ecological Focus Area the appropriate reduction in the agri-environment payment will be made</p>

			<p>GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover</p> <p>GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land</p> <p>GAEC 7: Retain landscape features</p> <p>In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains</p> <p>SMR 1: Respect Articles 4 & 5 of the Nitrates Directive in protecting waters from pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources. . Fertilisers, particularly organic fertilisers should only be applied when weather conditions are suitable.</p> <p>SMR 2: Respect the Birds Directive requirement to preserve & maintain & manage wild bird habitats. Avoid disturbance during bird nesting season.</p> <p>SMR 3: Respect the Habitats Directive requirement to protect against the deterioration of natural habitats within special areas of conservation.</p> <p>. Normal Farming Practice: Optimise production of fodder resulting in reduced species diversity in the sward. No restrictive cutting dates apply</p>	
Arable Grass		3 metre wide uncultivated	As Above	€140/ha **

Margins		strip along the full length of an existing field or LPIS parcel boundary resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost. The margin must be sown down to specific grasses		<p>(0.35 x 400m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: The Annex II threshold is not exceeded when this action is combined with Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes and Bee habitat- sand.</p>
		4 metre wide uncultivated strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost.	As Above	<p>€200/ha ** (0.50 x 400m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: The Annex II threshold is not exceeded when this action is combined with Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes and Bee habitat- sand.</p>

<p>Arable Grass Margins</p>		<p>6 metre wide uncultivated strip along watercourse resulting in quantifiable loss of production plus annual maintenance cost. To improve biodiversity in the farming landscape. To replace habitats lost through farming practices.</p>	<p>As Above</p>	<p>€280/ha ** (0.70 x 400m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Whereas if the allowed combined actions of Bird, Bee & Bat Boxes and Bee habitat- were aggregated with the arable margin, the threshold would appear to be exceeded, the boxes are delivered on trees or posts and could not be considered to overlap. The bee habitat-sand which does overlap does not exceed the threshold when added to payment for margin.</p>
<p>Bird, Bee and Bat Boxes and Bat Habitat</p>		<p>Bird Boxes</p>	<p>No GAEC or Cross Compliance Requirements Normal Farming Practice: Does not include any pro-active management of the types proposed for birds, bats or bees</p>	<p>€51 ** (€3.40 x 15)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost of installing and maintaining new bird nest boxes.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Whereas bird boxes may be delivered in combination with bee and bat boxes on certain area- based actions , margins, and bee habitat - sand, the fact that they</p>

			reside on a post or a tree means that the Annex II threshold is respected.
		Bee Boxes (Sand/Boxes)	<p>Bee boxes (box) €14 ** (€ 2.80 x 5) Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element.</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost of installing and maintaining new bee boxes. Box (es) must be protected from livestock</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Whereas bee boxes may be delivered in combination with bird and bat boxes on certain area-based actions, margins, and bee habitat - sand, the fact that they reside on a post or a tree means that the Annex II threshold is respected.</p> <p>Bee Boxes (sand) €63.44/ha ** (€31.72 X 2 habitats)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p>

				<p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost of creating and maintaining the new bee habitat. The habitat must be fenced and maintained annually for the duration of the contract.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Whereas the bee-habitat sand may be delivered in combination with bird, bee and bat boxes on certain area- based actions and margins, where this results in the threshold being exceeded it is justified on the grounds of the significant biodiversity benefit of providing for the conservation of the solitary bee.</p>
		Bat Boxes		<p>44.70 ** (€2.98 X 15) Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>This is an integrated measure containing both agri-environment and non-productive capital investment elements. The payment rate shown here is the agri-environment element</p> <p>The payment is based on the cost of installing and maintaining new bat roost boxes.</p>

				<p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is not exceeded when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Whereas bat boxes may be delivered in combination with bird and bee boxes on certain area- based actions , margins, and with bee habitat - sand, the fact that they reside on a post or a tree means that the Annex II threshold is respected.</p>
Committments addressing Visual and Heritage Landscape Features				
Traditional Dry Stone Wall Maintenance		<p>Follow an annual wall maintenance programme for the farm. Stone walls on Commonage lands are not eligible.</p>	<p>There is no requirement under cross-compliance or National legislation to maintain traditional dry stonewalls Normal Farming Practice: To keep parcel boundaries stockproof. No intervention but where boundary is required to be stockproof post and wire fencing is most cost effective..</p>	<p>€280 ha (€0.70 x 400m)</p> <p>Transaction Cost: No</p> <p>The payment is based on the additional cost of maintaining traditional freestanding dry stone walls. All walls entered for this action must be maintained from the commencement of the contract to the end of the contract.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Traditional stone wall maintenance may be delivered with certain area based actions but as it is a linear boundary action the Annex II threshold is always</p>

				respected.
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<p>Protection of Archaeological Sites</p>		<p>To protect archaeological features in the landscape. Establish and maintain a buffer margin around a visible monument in a tillage parcel. Managing vegetation at archaeological monuments.</p>	<p>Comply with National Monuments Acts by not interfering with monument Normal Farming Practice: Is confined to not causing deliberate damage to the feature. No Cross Compliance Requirement GAEC 4: Maintain minimum soil cover GAEC 5: Limit erosion in management of land GAEC 7: Retain landscape features In Ireland landscape features comprise of hedgerows and field drains</p>	<p>€360 per monument – (grassland) * (€120 x 3 monuments) Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>For grassland monuments, the payment is based on annual maintenance costs incurred by the farmer in managing vegetation by manual means around monuments in grassland parcels.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28 (8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own.</p> <p>Combination with other actions: Grassland monuments are features in the landscape and therefore the farmer has no choice as to where he delivers this action, It may be delivered with non-tillage area based actions and where the threshold is exceeded this is justified because of the heritage and landscape dividend achieved. The action involves managing vegetation.</p> <p>€438 per monument – (tillage) * (€146 X 3 monuments) Transaction Cost: Yes</p> <p>For tillage monuments, the payment is based on income forgone and the cost of establishing a 10 metre wide grass margin by sowing a grass seed mix around the feature and must extend form the external outer boundary of the monument. The margin must be maintained by hand mowing or strimming throughout the year.</p> <p><u>Annex II: of Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 – Article 28</u></p>
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				<u>(8)</u> The Annex II threshold of €450/ha is respected when the action is delivered on its own. Combination with other actions: N/A.
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*Units used are National Average

** Units used are maxima imposed on holding in Specification.

Only actions which overlap are described in the Annex II heading in this table – actions which occur on the same parcel, but do not overlap, are not described as there are no implications for Annex II

Integrated Pest Management may potentially form part of the baseline for many GLAS actions. It is a legal requirement to maintain records to demonstrate the application of the IPM principles and farmers are not being compensated for this under GLAS.