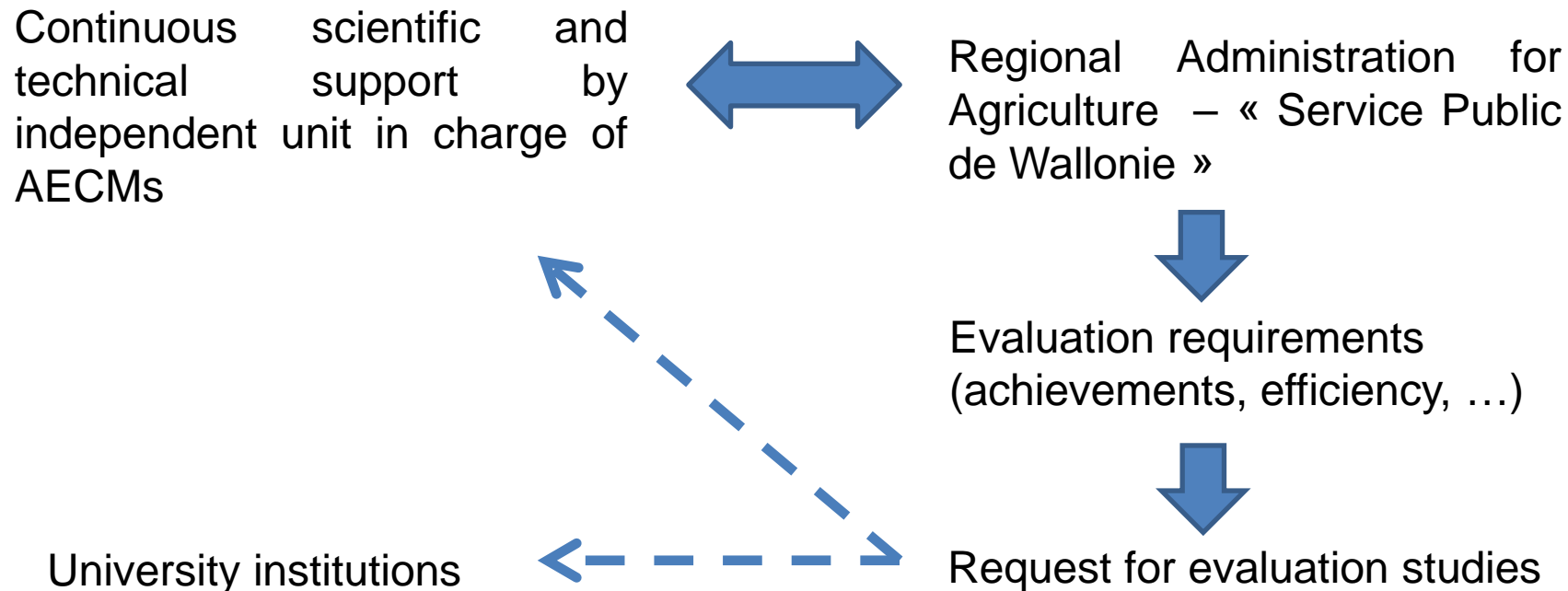


# Environmental Assessment - Tool for managing the Agri-Environment-Climate Scheme in Wallonia (Belgium)

## Overall framework and biodiversity examples

# Environmental Assessment - Tool for managing the Agri-Environment-Climate scheme in Wallonia (Belgium)

## Overall Framework



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## ■ Example: Extensive meadow management for the whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

### • Facts and question

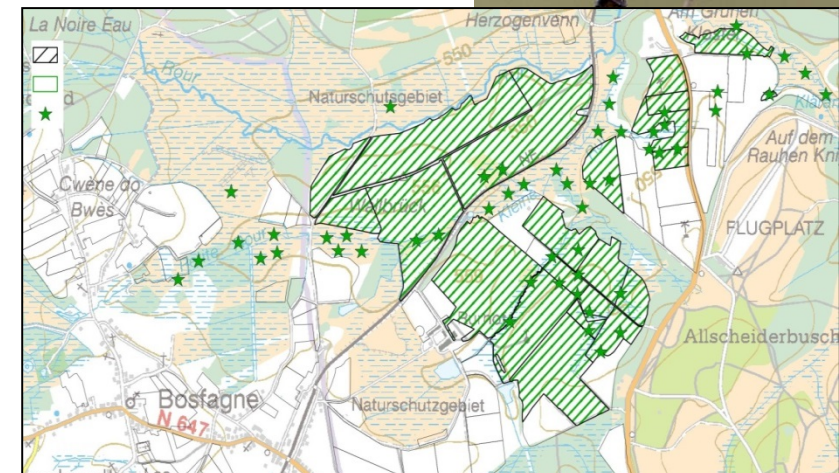
- Very endangered species, nests on the ground in (hay)meadow
  - Preliminary study to define area and terms of reference
  - Implementation (farmers + local nature and agro-environmental advisers)
- => Impact of extensive field management on the population of the whinchat?**

### • Methodology and results

- Local follow-up of reproduction (cycle & success rate)
- => Total number of juveniles: +30% (2011-2012)**
- => Increased number of couples from 9 to 27**
- => Positive ownership of farmers**

### • Recommendations

- Further local development is needed
- Development of similar actions for other species and context



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## ■ Example: Extensive management & conservation of a protected habitat

### • Facts and question

- AECM = fundamental tool for conservation of N2000 agricultural habitats
  - Main agricultural habitat = low and medium altitude hay meadows
  - AECM contracts apply to 50% of this habitat within N2000 areas
- => Impact on the implementation of the Habitats Directive?**



### • Methodology and results

- Long term botanical follow-up of several hay meadows under AECM contracts
  - Impact on vegetation in line with N2000 methodology assessment (typical species etc...)
- => Favourable output showing stable or improved quality for a majority of hay meadows**

### • Recommendations

- Continue botanical follow-up and assessment (other kind of habitats?)
- Extend AECM to 100% of N2000 agricultural habitats by 2020 with the necessary manpower

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## ■ Example: Farms with reduced stocking rate

### • Facts

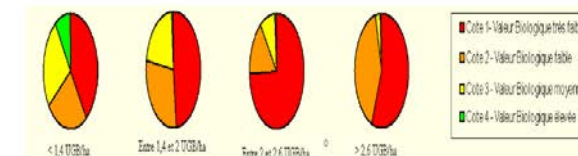
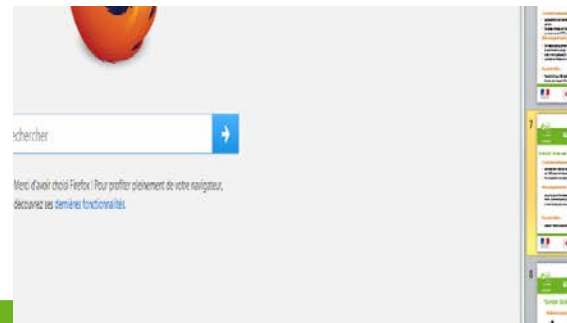
- Less intensive cattle farms should be good for the environment (less risk and more assets)
- AECMs financially support less intensive farms ( average stocking rate between 0,6 et 1,4 cattle/ha)
- => How does this affect biodiversity?**

### • Methodology and results

- Several meadows were sampled on farms that have different average stocking rates
- Meadows are rated according to their biological value, taking into account different elements (habitat rarity, state of conservation...)
- => The average biological value of farm's meadows decreases when the average stocking rate of the farms increases**

### • Recommendation

- Stronger support to farms with a low stocking rate; this will help to preserve biodiversity





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## Some main benefits

### The programme

- Stable programme with ongoing development and improvement (moderate cost, roughly 2% of AECM payments, max. 500 000€/year)
- Introduction and continuous development of targeted measures for specific environmental issues: flexible system based on a network of field advisers (see round table 2)
- Measures judged too close to the base line have been discontinued (autumn soil cover, specific extensive grass strips bordering streams)

### The measures

- Objectives obtained for the majority of measures
- Fundamental improvements made to terms of reference (unmowed refuge areas in extensive meadows, reduction of anti-parasite treatments in grazing areas, specific mowing methods for pollinators,...)



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■ Thank you for your attention

