



# DEPARTEMENT LANDBOUW & VISSERIJ

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Date  
28 May 2018

Version  
2019



## 2 CONDITIONS FOR THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the national or regional guidelines for environmental measures as intended in article 36 of the Directive (EG) no. 1308/2013 and must be read in conjunction with the appendices in part 4 of this national strategy as stated below and the information that can be found on the websites <http://lv.vlaanderen.be/nl/landbouwbeleid/plattelandsontwikkeling> (Programming Document for Rural Development - PDRDIII)

These environmental guidelines form an integral part of the national strategy for sustainable operational programmes.

### 2.1 OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Each operational programmes must contain at least two environmental actions or at least 10% of the approved expenditure must involve environmental measures.

In Flanders, at least two environmental actions means:

- ▶ two environmental actions at producer organisation (PO) level or;
- ▶ two environmental actions at producer level where at least 30% of the growers participate in each action (or growers who represent at least 30% of the WAP) or;
- ▶ several environmental actions at producer level: of which two have the participation of at least 20% of the growers (or growers who represent at least 20% of the WAP) and in total there must be an accumulated participation percentage of at least 60% (or at least 60% of the WAP) or;
- ▶ one environmental action of the level of PO + one environmental action at producer level where at least 30% of the growers participate (or growers who represent at least 30% of the WAP) or;
- ▶ one environmental action at the level of PO + several environmental actions at producer level: of which at least 20% of the growers participate (or growers who represent 20% of the WAP) and in total there must be an accumulated participation percentage of at least 30% (or at least 30% of the WAP).

An action at PO level (or in the case of a cluster of holdings) is only considered fully-fledged if they fall within action 4 (management and improvement of the water quality), action 5 (observations and warning systems and assistive technologies for support), action 6 (energy saving (energy efficiency)/renewable sources], action 7 (sustainable water management), action 8 (sustainable soil management), action 9 (sustainable waste management) or action 10 (Collective investments pertaining to environmentally friendly actions in the context of clustering holdings) and if they have a sufficient scale. Other environmental actions may be performed at PO level but do not count in the calculation of the number of environmental actions. Environmental actions that are only permitted at PO level within the national strategy are indicated in the description of the actions.

When at least 80% of the producers affiliated to a producer organisation have entered into one or more identical agro-environmental and climate commitments intended in article 28, paragraph 3 of Regulation (EU) no. 1305/2013, each of the commitments also count as an environmental action.







## 2.2 CONTROL

The assessment of the environmental measures shall take place as follows:

Cumulative funding conditions							
scenario	CMO objectives	National guidelines	Supralegislative measure	Agro-environmental measures + same compensation	Other environmental measure	Additional costs	Eligible for a grant?
1	X	X	X	X			yes
2	X	X	X		X	X	yes
3	X	X	X		X		no
4							no

Scenario 1: The environmental measure complies with the CMO objectives, complies with the national guidelines, is supralegislative (national or regional), is an agro-environmental measures such as in PDRD, satisfies the additional commitments and conditions, the same compensation as in PDRD, reporting and invoicing are in order → eligible for a grant.

Scenario 2: The environmental measure is not an agro-environmental measure as in the PDRD but is a different environmental measure, this complies with the additional commitments and conditions, there are specific additional costs, the reporting and invoicing are in order → eligible for a grant.

Scenario 3: All conditions are met but there are no additional costs → not eligible for a grant

Scenario 4: The environmental measure is not an agro-environmental measure nor is it any other environmental measure or if it is another environmental measure, it does not satisfy one of the other demands --> not eligible for a grant.

When checking the environmental measures, the competent services will cooperate with the services responsible for other agro-environmental measures and investment measures in the framework of rural development to guard over excluding possible double funding of these measures and those in the operational programmes. This also allows the avoidance of over compensation in the event of combination of measures.

## 2.3 ACTIONS WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

For all actions within this framework, the general conditions and commitments as well as the conditions and obligations per type costs (e.g. collective investments for individual businesses, consumables, ...) are applicable. Concerning the input and output indicators per action and outcome indicators for these environmental actions, reference is made to the relevant chapter in the national strategy.







- Coated seeds
- Grafted plants

**Obligations**

The competent services request the following commitments or obligations from the producers and/or the producer organisation :

- List of producers who participate/submit expenditure together with their agriculture number, invoice number and type of certificate (a certification of environmentally friendly production or of organic farming on the basis of externally monitored specifications) and a statement of the cultivated surface area;
- The reporting contains the results and the trends per crop including the added value of this measure in an integrated pest management approach; the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. in the use of resistant seeds, coated seeds and grafted plants;
- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification) and the registration of the used substance.





Examples of actions eligible for funding:

- Environmentally friendly and organic plant protection products and techniques (see list part 4):
  - mechanical measures of cultivation
  - natural enemies
  - predators
  - baits
  - organic and environmentally friendly plant protection products
  - measures for catching pests
  - physical techniques
  - feed for beneficials etc.
- Foils, nets and their rolling-up systems + enclosures against insects and damage by animals
- Nets for retaining the beneficials
- Seed material and analyses for organic nematodes control
- Sustainable animal repellent system and integrated rodent control

Products and techniques which do not yet appear on the list can always be proposed for approval to the competent services.

**Obligations**

The competent services request the following commitments or obligations from the producers and/or the producer organisation:

- List of producers who participate/submit expenditure together with their agriculture number, invoice number and type of certificate (a certification of environmentally friendly production or of organic farming on the basis of externally monitored specifications) and a statement of the cultivated surface area;
- The reporting contains the results and the trends per crop, the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. in the use of products and techniques;
- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification) and the registration of the used product/technique used.





demonstrated ex ante through project specifications or other technical documents. A lower percentage is only possible if there are multiple environmental benefits, which must be assessed by the competent services in advance.

Examples of actions eligible for funding

- Avoiding point source pollution and environmentally friendly removal of spray residues
  - Closed transfer systems (type easy flow)
  - Bioremediation systems to remove spray residues on an environmentally friendly way (phytotank, biofilter, heliosecc, sentinel, collective filling and rinsing place with a number of growers or at PO level)
  - Cleaning kit on the sprayer itself for cleaning the exterior
  
- Aids for sustainable application or avoidance of plant protection products
  - Drift reducing nozzles >50%
  - Steaming substrates/containers
  - Environmentally friendly algae killers
  - Machines for non-chemical weed control (e.g. mechanical weed control machines, vision based hoeing machines, etc.)
  - Mounting finger weeder or torsion weeder
  - Anti-root foil for woody soft fruits
  - Automatic section control systems on existing sprayer
  - Conversion of an existing spray boom in the context of drift reduction (e.g., allowing driving lower)
  - Windbreaks for drift reduction
  - Site-specific spraying with drones (within the legal framework)
  - GPS technology in the context of targeted sowing and application of plant protection products
  
- Aids for sustainable fertilisation
  - Section control techniques
  - Precision techniques such as fertilisation during sowing or planting, section spreading, site specific fertilisation during the hoeing and the site specific application of fertilisers.
  - Measuring devices and sensors to apply fertilisers site-specific: e.g. purchase of chlorophyll meters/nitrogen sensors.
  - GPS technology in the context of targeted sowing and application of fertilisers



<b>Obligations</b>	<p>The competent services request the following commitments or obligations from the producers and/or the producer organisation for the reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of producers who participate/submit expenditure together with their agriculture number, invoice number and type of certificate (a certification of environmentally friendly production or of organic farming on the basis of externally monitored specifications); statement of the cultivated surface area;</li> <li>- The reporting contains the results and the trends per crop, the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. in the use of products and techniques;</li> <li>- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification) and the registration of the used product/technique used.</li> </ul>
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**Action 5 – Observation and warning systems and tools to support**  
**Uniform principle IPM No. 2,3,5 and 8**

<b>Objectives and motivation of the action</b>	<p>Observations and warnings are the sum of actions in which the development of diseases or pests in agricultural and horticultural crops is monitored and in which guidance pertaining to the appropriate time of control and crop protection strategy to be deployed is formulated.</p> <p>Observation and warning systems help to facilitate targeted, sustainable pest control, avoid unnecessary treatments with chemical plant protection products (instead of traditional calendar spray treatments) and encourage sustainable alternatives. There are various observation methods for measuring disease or pest pressure according to the type of disease or pest, ranging from catching and counting insects to following the evolution of specific weather models. In some cases observations are made at a lot level, whilst for other diseases and pests the infection pressure is estimated based on several observation points within a larger area. These observations are conducted by independent, specialised services (qualified personnel). They also advise producers on the pest and/or disease pressure present (this prevents unnecessary spraying and inappropriate product use). Observation and warning systems for integrated crop protection have been developed for a variety of crops in the fruit and vegetable sector. A wide range of assistive technologies, which enable an extremely focused and sustainable application of disease and pest control, have also recently been made available in order to facilitate observations.</p> <p>This action aims to encourage observation and warning systems and the tools that support them.</p>
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**Expenditure eligible for funding and conditions**

Investments in the context of this action are fully eligible for assistance. For these investments

- a detailed justification with regard to energy use or energy savings (at least 15%) (see also general terms and conditions) like an energy-audit, feasibility study, ... must be supplied. A lower percentage is only possible if there are multiple environmental benefits, which must be assessed by the competent services in advance;
- it must be demonstrated that the energy production capacity of the alternative sources (+ potential cogeneration) at the producer organisation (PO) relates exclusively to the producer organisation's own annual energy consumption; thus the energy production may at most cover the producer organisation's annual energy requirement;
- it must be demonstrated that the finest available technology (which does not incur excessive costs) is applied;

Examples of energy savings and renewable sources:

- Anti-condensation film and façade screening (no fixed energy screening)
- Relighting
- Cogeneration at PO level
- Wind turbines at PO level
- Photovoltaic systems at PO level
- Geothermal energy at PO level
- Energy storage and heat buffer systems at PO level
- Residual heat recovery systems at PO level
- Installation of hoods to evaporators/ high-speed-roll-up-doors /flaps at the entrance of the cooling cells
- Conversion of cooling cells at PO level from chlorofluorocarbons to natural and environmentally friendly refrigerants such as CO<sub>2</sub> or NH<sub>3</sub>

**Obligations**

The competent service requests the following reporting commitments or obligations from the producers and/or producer organisation:

- List of producers (if applicable) who participate/submit expenditure, together with their agricultural number, invoice number, statement of the cultivated surface area;



- The reporting contains the results and the trends, the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. regarding energy use, savings and energy from renewable sources
- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification) and the registration of the used product/technique used.

## **Action 7 – Sustainable water management**

**Objectives and motivation of the action**

Water is indispensable in the agricultural and horticultural sector. Water is not only a natural resource and essential production agent; it is also a scarce good. As responding to all steps in the chain delivers optimal results, this action supports sustainable water management both during the crop growth process and the processes required for the harvested product. Water requires greater consideration in the 21st century. The European and Flemish environmental and agricultural policy therefore demands that additional attention be paid to this raw material. Against this background, water-saving measures are actively being encouraged on the one hand and the reuse of water and water treatment on the other.

Investing in water-saving systems is possible, provided that these lead to water savings of at least 15%. Investments in drip irrigation or similar systems aimed at reducing water consumption are possible, provided that they lead to water consumption savings of at least 5% compared to consumption prior to investment, and do not result in a net expansion of irrigation acreage, unless the total water consumption for irrigation of the entire farm, including post acreage expansion, does not exceed the average water consumption in the five-year period preceding investment.

**Commitment**

This action results in a reduced water consumption and protects water, a non-renewable natural resource.

Sustainable water consumption via improved water consumption and/or management in agriculture is essential for relieving pressure on scarce water reserves and protecting natural water supplies. The agricultural sector is a major water consumer, thus it is important that this natural resource and scarce commodity is protected. Furthermore, water purification leads to a restriction in the discharge of polluted residual water into the environment, and to a reduction in both water pollution and consumption.

**Expenditure eligible for funding and conditions**

Investments in the context of this action are fully eligible for subsidy. For such investments:



- A detailed justification for the investment in relation to water savings (of at least 15% or at least 5% in the case water use in drip irrigation or similar systems) by a water audit, feasibility study, ... (see general terms and conditions) must be supplied;
- It must be demonstrated that the finest available technology (which does not incur excessive costs) is applied;

Examples of sustainable water management:

- Drip tape (e.g. T-tape)
- Soil moisture sensors
- Precision irrigation (e.g. gun corner )
- Water saving methods for irrigation, such as control systems, radiation sensors
- Water purification and reuse of water at PO level
- Sprinkler with reduced water usage for frost prevention

**Obligations**

The competent services request the following reporting commitments or obligations from the producers and/or producer organisation:

- List of producers who participate/submit expenditure, together with their agricultural number, invoice number, statement of the cultivated surface area;
- The reporting contains the results and the trends, the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. regarding water use and savings
- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification) and the registration of the used product/technique used.



## Cluster 3 – Waste and nutrient management

### Action 8 - Sustainable soil management

#### Objectives and motivation of the action

High quality, fertile agricultural land is an irreplaceable production resource for sustainable and profitable agriculture. Sustainable soil management is an interplay of different principles e.g. reducing mineral fertilisers (see also action 4 for aids for sustainable fertilisation), adding manure and compost for improving soil organic matter and soil biodiversity, reduction of pesticides (see cluster IPM) and crop rotation.

Horticultural practices and techniques that improve soil structure, such as cover crops, erosion prevention measures and cultivation techniques that concentrate organic material in the top layer of the soil are encouraged in this action. A good, stable soil structure is achieved thanks to the effect of organic matter in the soil, the activity of soil life and a favourable soil pH. Organic matter acts as both a binding agent for the creation of stable aggregates and food for soil life.

Thus farmers have a vested interest in applying best practices and cultivation techniques that result in good yields and simultaneously maintain fertile soil. Cover crops are one such best practice. After the main crop is harvested, cover crops are sown on lots that would otherwise remain fallow. Such cultivation improves the soil structure, contributes to fertile soil, reduces the compaction of agricultural land and valorises the harvesting residue from the preceding main crop. Another best practice is crop rotation which is stimulated indirectly by research, advisory services, certificates of environmentally friendly production,....

Non-inversion tillage is another means of contributing to sustainable soil management. Only work the subsoil and not the top soil. These "anti-erosion ploughs" contribute to a strong reduction in erosion and, using suitable techniques, can be deployed on erosion-sensitive lots. We additionally focus on measures in the context of soil compaction, such as the mounting of subsoilers onto (existing) ploughs, in order to ensure that hard soil layers under the plough furrow are infiltrated. This improves the infiltration capacity of water and creates an improved root growth. This consequently enables the more efficient absorption of nutrients and results in healthy crops that do not require additional plant protection products. Which in turn ensures an environmentally friendly cultivation.





The Manure Decree contains specific provisions in which the sowing of a catch crop following the main crop is mandatory and in which cover crop is therefore ineligible.

This system shall be evaluated by the competent services on an annual basis and, if necessary, the amount, list of permitted crops and conditions will be amended (please refer to Appendix 4 of Part 4). At least every five years, the additional cost will be calculated



**Action 9 – Sustainable waste management**

**Objectives and motivation of the action**

Increasing consumption is placing greater pressure on available raw materials, making it increasingly important to recover materials and energy from waste and to minimise the amount of waste. This action focuses on limiting the quantities of waste and maximising the reuse of raw materials and products in a variety of ways:

- use of biodegradable materials and bioplastics during cultivation
- processing of crop residues
- valorisation of waste flows
- reuse of potting compost

By reducing the amount of waste and encouraging reuse and recycling, an increasing number of steps can be taken towards a circular economy and, in time, the closing of the cycles.

Biodegradable materials are an alternative for plastics, which exit exclusively via residual waste. These biodegradable materials (such as biodegradable plastic foil, rope, clips, ...) are of organic origin and degrade in the soil and/or are processable in a composting process.

Investments for processing cultivation residue at the producer organisation level are eligible for support because they contribute to a significant waste reduction, a decrease in plant protection product emissions and/or energy savings. The recycling of substrates is also eligible, provided that they are recycled into new substrate products, bricks, soil improvers etc. by specialised processing companies. The processing of crop residue is also eligible, provided it is processed sustainably by specialised processing companies via composting, bio-fermentation and other processes.

The valorisation and reuse of waste flows is also encouraged. Such as the processing of tomato fibre in the cardboard industry and the various reuse opportunities for potting compost, for example. Since it is of considerable importance to the circular economy, there are an increasing number of possibilities in this context.



<p><b>Commitment</b></p>	<p>A circular economy focuses on maximum reusability of products and raw materials and minimum value destruction. Waste is minimised or, where it remains, harnessed as raw material for new products. Thus this action also helps to close the cycle.</p> <p>This action protects natural resources and protects the environment via fossil fuel savings and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, ...) and other air pollutants.</p>
<p><b>Expenditure eligible for funding and conditions</b></p>	<p>The additional cost is eligible for funding. Supplementary costs (additional costs) imply the specific costs that are calculated as the difference between the traditional and actual costs incurred. For the calculation of the additional cost associated with this environmental action, account is taken of the potential cost savings, the potential minus yield and the potential extra costs. At least every five years, the additional cost will be calculated. For investments, the full cost is eligible for subsidy. It must be demonstrated that the finest available technology (which does not incur excessive costs) has been applied where appropriate;</p> <p>Costs for processing, recycling or composting are admissible upon the condition that they do not comprise obligatory expenditure and are clearly demonstrable additional efforts.</p> <p>Examples of sustainable waste management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilisation of biodegradable foil, ropes and clips</li> <li>- Biodegradable foil for cultivation (e.g. around substrates)</li> <li>- Recycling of horticultural plastic</li> <li>- Processing of cultivation residue, substrates and crop residue</li> <li>- Reuse and revaluation of potting soil</li> <li>- Valorisation of waste flows (e.g. tomato fibre, spent mushroom compost etc.)</li> <li>- Investments in the processing of crop residue (OP level), such as composting plants, biofermenters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Obligations</b></p>	<p>The competent services request the following reporting commitments or obligations from the producers and/or producer organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of producers who participate/submit expenditure, together with their agricultural number, invoice number, certificate type (a certification of environmentally friendly production or of organic farming on the basis of externally monitored specifications); statement of the cultivated surface area;</li> <li>- The reporting contains the results and the trends (per crop), the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. regarding the action;;</li> </ul>

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- Processor/collector certificate (approved by the Public Waste Agency of Flanders) for waste processing where applicable;
- Waste processing recycling proof where applicable;
- Registration of the means/technique utilised.
- Possession of the detailed invoice (at least quantity and specification, in the case of waste processing, the acreage, quantities, type of processing and crop must all be clearly specified) and the registration of the used technique used.

## Cluster 4 – Clustering of companies

### Action 10 – Collective investments pertaining to environmentally friendly actions in the context of company clustering

<b>Objectives and motivation of the action</b>	<p>Whilst this action does not introduce new actions in itself, it is a different action because it allows collective investments at the production holding clustering level via CMO subsidisation.</p> <p>Clustering means the pooling of production holdings within each other's immediate environment, with the intention of collaborating. Such a cluster, presents an opportunity for cooperation with respect to water, energy and waste.</p> <p>Such cluster structures make expensive yet environmentally friendly investments more feasible. Investments in solar energy (solar thermal or photovoltaic systems), wind energy (wind turbines), cogeneration, waste stream valorisation projects, waste management, water purification etc. are eligible for CMO subsidisation in this context.</p>
<b>Commitment</b>	<p>Environmental benefits include savings on fossil fuels and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide,...) and other air pollutants. These substances negatively influence air quality (risk of ozone, acid rain, ...), have a negative impact on public health and are the likely cause of global warming.</p>
<b>Expenditure eligible for funding and conditions</b>	<p>The full cost of the investment is eligible for subsidy. For these investments</p>

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- a detailed justification for the investment with regard to energy consumption or energy savings (of at least 15%): energy audit, feasibility study, etc. must be supplied (where applicable);
- it must be demonstrated that the energy production capacity relates exclusively to the cluster's energy consumption (where applicable);
- it must be demonstrated that sustainable water management and water quality management relate exclusively to the cluster's water management and water quality (where applicable);
- it must be demonstrated that the waste valorisation projects relate exclusively to the cluster's waste management (where applicable);
- it must be demonstrated that the finest available technology (which does not incur excessive costs) has been applied;

For investments pertaining to water, energy or waste, the commitments or obligations listed under actions 4, 6, 7 and/or 9 must be complied with;

Examples:

- Cogeneration
- Wind turbines
- Photovoltaic systems
- Geothermics
- Energy storage and heat buffer systems
- Residual heat recovery systems
- Waste flow valorisation projects
- Waste management

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**Obligations**

The competent services request the following commitments or obligations from the producers and/or producer organisation:

- For investments pertaining to water, energy or waste, the commitments or obligations listed under actions 4, 6, 7 and/or 9 must be complied with;
- List of parties who participate/submit expenditure, together with their agricultural number, invoice number, statement of cultivated area;
- The reporting contains the results and the trends, the number of participants, the opportunities still present, etc. regarding the environmentally friendly clustering of holdings;
- Possession of the detailed invoice with detailed description and the registration of the used product/technique used.



# **AHENCIS**

Part 4 of the national strategy :

Appendix 1 - List of actions at producer level

Appendix 2 – List of environmentally friendly and organic products and techniques to prevent and control diseases and pests

Appendix 3 - Standard flat rates regarding the additional costs of resistant seeds, coated seeds, grafted plants and related

Appendix 4 - List of crops eligible for cover crops

