



## Perspectives on available support motivating or demotivating adoption of agri-environmental measures

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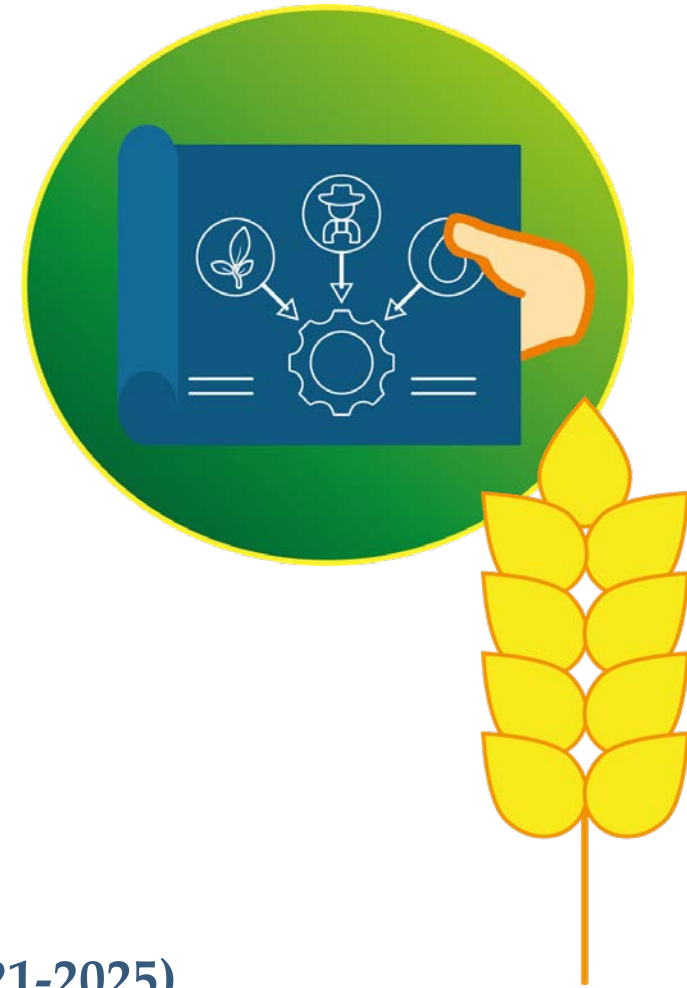
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# Farmer's perspectives on available support - as motivating or demotivating adoption of agri-environmental measures

- The presentation aims to shed light on the adoption of measures from practitioners' perspectives, We ask:
  - Do available subsidies motivate for implementation of measures, or is this a barrier?
  - Do available administrative support –motivate for implementation of measures, or is insufficient information a barrier?
  - Do you have access to machinery and equipment for implementing the measure?



The presentation draws on results from the EU Horizon project **Optain (2021-2025)**

<https://www.optain.eu/>

# OPTAIN - OPTimal strategies to retAIN and re-use water and nutrients in small agricultural catchments across different soil-climatic regions in Europe

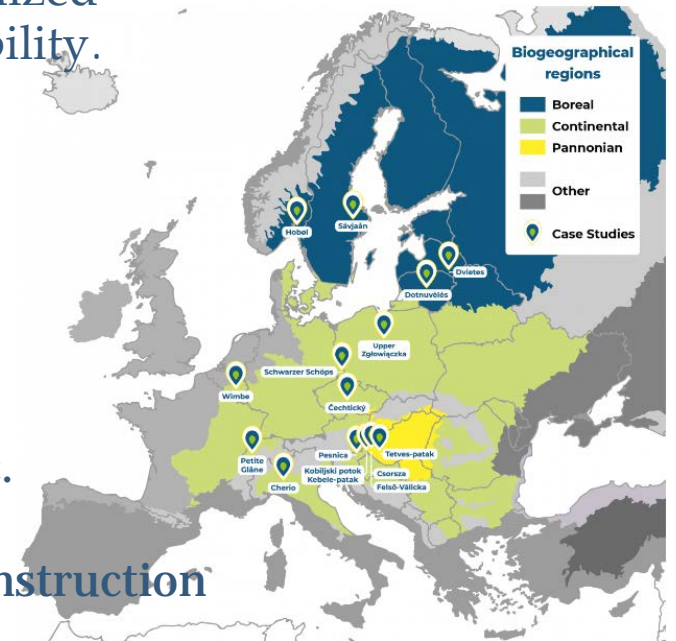
**Aims** to identify measures for water and nutrient retention and model for optimized combination of measures considering the environmental and economic sustainability.

The focus is on Natural small water retention measures (NSWRMs):

**Land management measures**, e.g. cover crops, conservation tillage etc.

**Structural linear measures**, e.g. riparian buffers, grassed water ways etc.

**Structural areal measures**, e.g. retention / detention ponds, wetland construction



*14 case studies in catchments dominated by agriculture: Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland. In each case study a research team and a multi-actor reference group (MARG).*

# The measures addressed in the project

## Land management measures

*Implemented on farmland*



- Conservation tillage
- Crop rotation
- Cover crops
- Drought resistant crops
- Early sowing
- Intercropping

## Structural linear measures

*Implemented on farmland and on other areas*



- Riparian buffer strip
- Buffers between fields
- Drainage control
- Grassed waterways

## Structural area measures

*Often permits needed from agencies, assistance often needed from entrepreneurs*



- Afforestation
- River restoration
- Retention / detention pond
- Terrace
- Constructed wetlands

# Adoption of NSWORMs to address drought, flooding, erosion

- Adoption of measures include additional direct and indirect costs (as seeds, or time), and new practices.
- Policy instruments and incentives are needed to motivate adoption of measures.

*High coercion policy instruments*

*Low coercion*

## Mandatory all landowners

Some practices are mandatory for all landowners. An example is riparian buffer which is mandatory in some countries.

## Conditional for farmers to receive basic income support

In EU 9 Good Agricultural Ecological Condition standards are specified.

## Economic support

EU CAP I Eco schemes,  
EU CAP II Rural development programme

Funds from projects / programmes defined by environmental agencies

## Information incentives

Farmer advisor services  
Informal education – peer to peer learning  
Multi-actor arenas

# Data collection

Farmers and land managers implementing NSWORMs were invited to participate in an online survey to investigate perspectives on the sufficiency or insufficiency of incentives.

The questions addressed:

- (i) the sufficiency of funds for implementing and for maintaining the measure i.e. if access to / lack of funds represented a barrier or a motivation.
- (ii) The sufficiency of administrative support for, applying for funds, and for information for technical implementation of the measures.
- (iii) The situation regarding access to machinery, instruments.

- The survey (anonymous) was translated national languages by the local research teams. The teams selected the measures to be addressed.
- In total 129 respondents filled in the survey from, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia.
- The presentation represents preliminary results (more data are being received).



## Some measures addressed in the survey

- Cover crops
- Conservation tillage
- Riparian buffer zones
- Retention / detention ponds
- Wetland construction

# Results perceptions on sufficiency / insufficiency of incentives

(Numbers represent *mean values (low numbers insufficient support)*)

Measures	No. Resp.	Financial support		Information / advice		Machines, instruments
		Implementation	Maintenance	Applying for funding	Technical implementation	
Cover crops	49	2,8	3,3	3,7	3,4	3,3
Conservation tillage	37	2,6	2,6	3,7	3,5	3,2
Buffer zones riparian	47	2,2	2,1	3,3	3,2	3,3
Retention / detention pond	29	2,1	2,6	3,1	3,1	2,8
Wetland construction	12	3,0	2,7	3,8	3,7	2,4

<b>1. Highly insufficient</b> - important barrier	<b>2. Insufficient</b> support - a barrier	<b>3. Some support</b> - sometimes barrier	<b>4. Mostly sufficient</b> support - a motivation	<b>5. Good support</b> (important motivation)
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## Qualitative comments added

“Support should **compensate for yield losses** resulting from the use of a given cultivation technology”.

“**Reduced tillage** requires very high financial outlays for the purchase of appropriate machinery, and knowledge because it introduces a change in production technology. Knowledge transfer is also insufficient”.

“Support for the introduction of winter catch crops compensates for the costs of sowing - there are further **costs associated with the elimination of catch crops** before sowing the next plant - support does not compensate for these costs”

“Support for the **purchase of machines** is small and is a barrier to implementation”.

“Guidelines were often unclear and not adapted to practical conditions. ..They were **not sufficiently tailored to real needs** and possibilities due to insufficient consultation with practitioners”.



# Reflections on survey results

- Common problems at different sites and for different measures.
- Few implemented structural linear and structural area measures.
- *Economic support*: A few found this to be sufficient and helpful and some found this as highly insufficient. The “mean” value show that this is perceived as insufficient.
- *Administrative support* – most found that support is helpful but sometimes a barrier. Slightly less satisfaction regarding support for administrative paperwork.



To reach the objectives of the Green deal and Farm to Fork strategy – coordinated / joint actions at supra-national level may be needed, and improved coordination across sectors.

Addressing awareness, norms, knowledge, and compensating direct and indirect costs are needed. Knowledge is needed to understand how this can be achieved.

# Thank you for your attention

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