

Sub-measure fiche (annex II to the measure fiche "forestry")

Establishment of agroforestry systems

Measure 8

Article 23 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Article XX of Commission Regulation [...]

This fiche is based on the text of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 [EAFRD] and, when relevant, on Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 [CPR]. Since the Delegated and Implementing Acts supplementing these regulations have not yet been adopted, some modifications to this guidance fiche might be needed after their adoption.

This guidance does not represent a binding legal interpretation of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. It is therefore essentially non-binding in nature and complements the related legal acts.

1. RATIONALE OF THE MEASURE

Agroforestry means land-use systems and practices where woody perennials are deliberately integrated with crops and/or animals on the same land management unit. The trees may be single or in groups inside parcels (silvoarable agroforestry, silvopastoralism, grazed or intercropped orchards) or on the limits between parcels (hedges, tree lines).

Agroforestry, the integration of trees, crops and/or livestock on the same area of land, has been identified by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) as a 'win-win' multifunctional land-use approach that balances the production of commodities (food, feed, fuel, fibre, etc.) with non-commodity outputs such as environmental protection and cultural and landscape amenities¹.

2. CONTRIBUTION TO FOCUS AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVES

In the context of strategic programming², agroforestry systems contribute to:

¹ Agriculture and the Environment IX, Valuing Ecosystems: Policy, Economic and Management Interactions (2012), Developing modern, multifunctional agroforestry systems for sustainable intensification: <http://orgprints.org/21905/1/2012.Smith%20SACSEPA.pdf>

² See Annex III of the Commission Working Paper "Elements of strategic programming for the period 2014-2020".

Priority 5 "*Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture and food sectors and the forestry sector*", and especially to Focus area 5 E "*Fostering carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry*" and to Priority 4: "*Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry*".

Agroforestry systems contribute to the objectives identified in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by contributing to biomass production, water quality by increasing infiltration and slowing down the leaching of nitrates, controlling erosion, mitigating events related to climate change and preventing from fire damages. Agroforestry systems contribute to carbon sequestration, and have positive effect on biodiversity and the improvement of soil quality. Moreover, agroforestry allows also a creation of specific microclimates that may function as windbreak or offering shelter and protection to livestock and other animals in a given area. Agroforestry systems provide also cultural and recreational added-value to local population, and offer an alternative additional income source.

3. SCOPE, TYPE AND LEVEL OF SUPPORT

3.1. Type of operation

The eligible types of operations may be:

- Establishment of agroforestry systems
- Maintenance of the established agroforestry systems³

3.2. Beneficiaries

The eligible beneficiaries may be:

- Private land holders
- Municipalities
- Associations of private land holders or municipalities

The forest land can be owned by the State on condition the manager of the forest is a private body or municipality.

3.3. Eligible costs and conditions

3.3.1. Eligible costs

Establishment costs may include;

- Establishment of agroforestry system by planting trees: costs of the plantation material and plantation, including storing and treatments of seedlings with necessary prevention and protection materials. Applicable shrub and tree species should be listed in the Rural Development Programme.

³ Maintenance costs under this measure are paid only in case the establishment costs are also supported under this measure. However, establishment costs may be paid without continuing the payments with maintenance costs.

- Establishment of agroforestry system by converting existing forests or other wooded land: costs of felling trees, thinning, pruning and protection of trees against grazing animals, if applicable.
- Any other costs directly linked to the creation of agroforestry system (e.g. preparation of the feasibility studies, establishment plan, soil examination, soil preparation and protection, preparation of existing forest or other wooded land, including thinning and pruning in order to convert to agroforestry system)
- Silvopastoral (grazing) system watering and protective facilities (e.g. on site sheds) are eligible.
- Necessary treatment connected to the establishment, including watering and cutting.
- Replanting in case of biotic or abiotic calamity causing a large scale failure (during the first year of afforestation). In order to replant, a formal recognition by public authorities acknowledging officially an occurrence of a calamity is necessary. Replanting should be adapted to acknowledged needs. The possibility should be envisaged in the Rural Development Programme.
- The plantation of forest tree species may be accompanied by plantation of other tree species, such as ancient fruit trees.

Maintenance costs may include;

- Maintenance of the agroforestry system for a maximum period of 5 years through annual premium per hectare afforested. Costs related to assisted regeneration during this period could be accepted particularly for suitable native species and varieties.
- Various form of support adjusted to the types of agroforestry systems: e.g. area based support for established tree strips or belts, weeding, pruning, and thinning or payments using other appropriate unitary costs.
- Protective actions and investments (such as fences or individual protection tubes, establishment or maintenance of watering places for animals, etc.)

3.3.2. *Further conditions*

- The recommended ratio of woodland/trees and agricultural land in place is to be defined by the Member State taking account of local pedo-climatic conditions, forestry species (applicable tree and shrubs) and the need to ensure the agricultural use of the land.
- As a recommendation, more than one forest tree species, particularly multipurpose trees (both fruit and timber) should be planted in the same agroforestry system, thus contributing to wider biodiversity.
- Member State shall define the maximum and minimum number of trees. This number should reflect the dual use of land. In this regard, as rough average, 250 trees would be recommended as maximum.

3.4. Principles with regard to the setting of selection criteria

See the European Commission document "Guidelines on eligibility and Selection Criteria".

It is recommended to promote multifunctional systems with higher public benefit, such as erosion/desertification control, animal welfare and biosafety actions (separation of grazing lands by forest belts), or supporting pollinators.

3.5. Links to other legislation (e.g. "baseline" for measures that compensate for costs incurred / income foregone)

A link to the relevant legislation should be established in the Rural Development Programme.

3.6. Aid intensity/amount of support

The maximum support rate is 80 % of the amount of the eligible investment for the establishment of agro-forestry systems.

3.7. Co-financing rate(s)

This measure is among the measures which contribute to the compliance with the requirement stipulated in Article 59(6) of Regulation 1305/2013 and which requires that at least 30% of the total EAFRD contribution to the rural development programme shall be reserved for measures contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as environmental issues.

Furthermore, this measure can also benefit from a higher co-financing rate (75%) as it contributes to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation (Article 59(4)(b) of the RD Regulation). In case of the less developed regions, in the outermost regions and in the smaller Aegean islands this co-financing rate can be even higher (85% of the eligible public expenditure) as stipulated in Article 59(3)(a).

4. INDICATORS

In planning the indicators it should be taken into consideration the principles detailed in the Annex IV of Working Paper "Elements of strategic programming for the period 2014-2020".

5. VERIFIABILITY AND CONTROLLABILITY

Reference to be made to the "*Guidelines on verifiability and prevention of errors*".

6. BEST PRACTISES

Agroforestry across Europe includes both traditional systems that are an essential part of cultural heritage (e.g. dehesa in Spain, montados in Portugal, grazed orchards, wood pastures) and modern alley cropping systems that combine high productivity with protection of the environment.

Agroforestry systems can be established in various ways. On agricultural land trees can be planted in rows with a distance that allows the agricultural machines to enter and work in the area. However, trees can also be planted in and around the agricultural parcel in

strips in order to protect the agricultural crops against wind, thus creating a better microclimate and protecting topsoil against wind and water erosion.

In silvoarable systems trees, such as e.g. poplar, can be planted for timber production and walnut for fruit/multipurpose production (as regards walnut, the produced timber could also be valuable).

Concerning silvopastoral systems several traditional systems exist, such as *Montados* or *Dehesa* where animal grazing, cork and wood production take place. Silvopastoral systems can also be established to protect biodiversity against invasive weeds and/or maintain special landscape characters e.g. alpine pasture.

Various forms of good examples could be found in agroforestry websites, such as:

ENRD publication; EU Rural Review N 9, page 38

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=ED57142C-E0C7-3E97-E70E-E40EC9E8CCB1

European agroforestry association:

<http://www.agroforestry.eu/>

French Agroforestry Association;

<http://www.agroforesterie.fr/index.php>

UK Farm Woodland Forum;

<http://www.agroforestry.ac.uk/>