

Workshop on Agri-environment-climate Measures (AECM): Challenges of controllability and verifiability

Brussels – 7 December 2016

Wifi: Codes are available at the registration desk

Group work

Designing and implementing audit-compliant result-oriented AECM

Group work:

2 Topics – 4 Groups

Distribution according to badge colour

- Emission reduction (Green)
- Emission reduction (Blue)
- Water quality (Red)
- Water quality (Yellow)

Group work

Main task: Elaborating a AECM operation

Organization of the group work

- Additional group-specific information
- 35 Minutes group work
- 1 person per group reports back
- Auditors review the results

Group work

Issues to be elaborated and discussed by the groups

- **Objective(s)**
- **Results/ Indicators**
- **Baseline**
- **Payments**
- **Verification/ Control**
- **Other issues**

- **Open questions**

Reporting

Measure description		Open questions/ Remaining bottlenecks
Category	Solution(s)/ Approach(es)	
Objective(s)		
Results / Indicators		
Baseline		
Payments		
Verification / control		
Other issues		

Group work

Case 1: Climate/ Emission reduction

The agricultural sector is responsible for almost 10% of all emissions in the EU. In Member States these figures can vary between agricultural systems depending on a number of factors e.g. the types of soil and land use, enteric fermentation and manure management. The two last sources, which are directly linked to livestock production, constitute about a half of all such emissions.

To become a “zero emission area”, the authorities in one Member State intend to address the problem of how to reduce emissions from farming. The entire agricultural area has to be considered, yet, there is an important split in the country:

In the Northern region, livestock production is more intensive and is focused on meat production, predominantly based on grazing. Production relies upon highly productive temporary grassland which is part of the general rotation system of the farm, which means that the grassland is ploughed on a regular basis.

In the Southern region, the livestock farming is slightly different. Primarily, milk is produced and the production system is less intensive than in the Northern region. The dairy herds are mainly outdoor grazed, but primarily on permanent grassland.

So far the Member State has tried to implement the same action-based AEC operations over the whole country but this approach has not delivered good results. The reasons for this are twofold. On one hand, the actions did not require any change in production patterns by the beneficiaries in the Southern region and yet the current less intensive practices are not threatened by disappearance. On the other hand, the actions required and the incentives to put them in place were not sufficiently attractive for the potential beneficiaries in the Northern region.

How could these problems be addressed by a result based AECM where the main objective is to decrease emissions by looking at the entire farming systems in these two regions?

Group work

Case 2: Water quality

Agriculture is an important source of water pollution, as a result of the leaching of pollutants from manure, as well as from chemical products (pesticides, fertilizers). In order to achieve good status of water bodies and ensure compliance with objectives of Water Framework Directive, one Member State decided to promote further action (beyond the regulatory baseline) through voluntary AECM.

In that Member State, one of the main causes of water pollution is a high usage of plant protection products (mainly herbicides). The high application of herbicides dominates in the Western region, known for intensive horticulture. The average farm size is 25 ha. While some farmers already apply integrated farming methods to reduce the use of herbicides or have even switched to organic farming (no use of artificial pesticides), there is still a predominant group of farmers applying high quantities of herbicides. According to the national legislation, there is an obligatory requirement to establish 5 metre wide buffer strips, however this has not delivered the necessary improvements. The situation cannot continue if the overall objective of improving water quality in the region is to be achieved; the entire relevant territory / agricultural land should be under an appropriate management.

The Eastern region of this Member State is dominated by intensive livestock production. This leads to fertilisation with organic fertilisers rather than mineral ones. While some farms produce enough organic fertilisers for their use (or more than what they consume), others need to purchase it (from farms producing more than needed for their consumption). However, by trend, most farmers apply very high doses of fertilisers.

The objective of this to-be-developed result based AEC operation is to improve water quality in both parts of the region.