

Good Practices – EAFRD projects' template

Project name/title

Green Low- Carbon Agri- Environment Scheme (GLAS)

Context

Why was the project needed? What was the situation to begin with? Do not start talking about the objectives. Just the context. (max.300 words)

Ambitious growth targets for the agricultural industry outlined in the Food Harvest 2020 and Foodwise 2025 reports are likely to impact on biodiversity, water quality and climate change. Modern intensive farming practices resulting in enhanced productivity will be required to meet growth targets. It is perceived that environmental damage resulting from increased output will impact on water quality, biodiversity, and climate change.

The intensification of farming has led to changes in land use which has decreased biodiversity within farms. As farms become more intensive hedgerows and ditches are removed and fields are amalgamated for ease of modern machinery. Unproductive wetland has been drained and brought back into production. This has led to a decline in plants species, mammals and insects. Biodiversity needs to coexist with agriculture.

Agriculture is one of the main sources of nitrates in groundwater and contributes to nutrient enrichment of water from run-off from slurry, manure, and fertiliser application. Increased agricultural production targets will impact on water quality. There is a particular challenge to deliver the growth targets in a manner that protects water quality. Ireland must comply with the EU Water Framework Directive which sets strict deadlines for meeting water quality objectives.

The GLAS scheme recognizes the importance of High Status Waterbodies (HSWs) and gives farms with HSWs priority access to the scheme. Watercourse fencing is mandatory for all dairy and beef farms located in high status Water Areas. Watercourses are extremely important to biodiversity and many habitats are found in watercourses.

Water and habitat quality is impacted as result of livestock access to watercourses. If livestock have access to watercourses animal faeces are deposited in the water which leads to contamination of water and nutrient enrichment. If livestock have access to watercourses in large numbers poaching of the soil adjacent to the watercourse can occur this leads to greater run-off and potential for sediment to reach watercourses.

The construction of fences along watercourses to eliminate livestock access to watercourses prevents contamination of water and reduces nutrients entering watercourses. Excluding stock results in reduced erosion and prevents soil entering the watercourse and thereby reducing contamination. Sensitive management of watercourses such as the construction of fences along watercourses can be undertaken with limited impacts on biodiversity.

The GLAS scheme has been designed to respond to the environmental problems caused by modern intensive farming practices. It aims to address some of the environmental damage resulting from increased output.

GLAS the new agri- environment scheme which is funded by the (RDP) has a number of specifically designed measures which address water quality, climate change and biodiversity.

The GLAS Scheme has funding of approximately €1.4 billion over the course of the Rural Development Programme. This will provide funding for 50,000 farmers to join the scheme.

Objectives

In response to the context set out above, what did the project hope to achieve and what was its overall approach for doing this? Do not simply list planned activities, which will be covered below. (max 300 words)

GLAS stands for Green Low- Carbon Agri- Environment Scheme. GLAS aims to address the cross cutting objectives of climate change, water quality and biodiversity. It aims to improve water quality, mitigate climate change and promote biodiversity. According to the DAFM the scheme is "green as it preserves our traditional hay meadows and low-input pastures; low-carbon as it retains the carbon stocks in soil through margins, habitat preservation and practices such as minimum tillage; and,

agri-environment as it promotes agricultural actions, which introduce or continue to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation.”

Activities

What did the project do and in what order did it implement its activities? If possible, include: a timeframe; who/which stakeholders were involved; the reasons and logic of the approach taken. The aim is to enable readers to really understand what the project did and how. Do not provide a simple list of bullet points but briefly explain each activity. (max 600 words)

Hugh Mooney a beef farmer from Carbury Co. Kildare is a participant in the GLAS scheme. Hugh outlines his involvement in GLAS. “I was interested in the GLAS scheme and spoke to my GLAS advisor who informed me that he was classified as Tier 3 which meant access to the GLAS scheme was not guaranteed. My advisor outlined to me that I could improve my chances of getting access to the scheme by undertaking an action such as the protection of watercourses. My farm is not located in a high status water area so it wasn’t mandatory for me to undertake the protection of watercourses action. I have a stream running along the boundary of my farm so I decided to fence off this watercourse. This involved constructing a fence of 258 meters along the stream using treated timber stakes and attached barbed wire to the stakes. The fence was constructed 1.5 meters from the top of the bank. This will allow vegetation to re-grow along the bank of the stream it will create a buffer strip and will allow biodiversity to flourish. The fence is excluding all bovines from the watercourse. The payment for fencing of the watercourse is €1.50 per m/year.”

Results

What did the project achieve? What has changed and how was the initial identified need met? Include quantified improvements where possible. Unquantifiable progress can also be described (e.g. increase in revenue, jobs created, number of participating businesses, increase in sales, increase in visitors, etc.). Keep it short – a list is fine (max 300 words)

The fence is excluding bovines from the watercourse. Hugh has noticed that vegetation along the banks of the river has started to rejuvenate. This is improving the stability of the bank and creating a buffer strip which will help to reduce pollution by intercepting nutrients. There has been a reduction in lameness among the herd since the animals have been prevented from entering the watercourse.

Lessons

What factors should be taken into account when transferring the example? What was interesting, unexpected, surprising about implementing the project? What could be done better? Keep them short and to the point. (Max 300 words)

Hugh made the following comment “I would recommend using treated timber stakes when fencing a watercourse this helps prolong the life of the fence. Initially I was reluctant to fence off the watercourse because of the work involved. Having constructed the fence I believe I made the right decision as it helped to secure my entry into GLAS and is helping to protect the biodiversity in the watercourse and prevent pollution. Without the incentive of the payment for the GLAS action protection of watercourses. I would never have considered fencing the watercourse or have given any thought to the damage being done to biodiversity by allowing animal’s access to the watercourse.

Project general info

Name (project title or short name)	
Dates ¹ (Indicate both start and end dates ²)	
Member State (or region if regionalised RDP)	
Type of beneficiary (public/SME/farmer/NGO etc.)	
Measure ³ (or measures)	
Priority & Focus Area ⁴ (for 2014-2020 projects)	

Funding^{4, 6}

Total budget in EUR	
EAFRD contribution in EUR	
National/regional co-financing in EUR	
Private funds in EUR	
Other sources (in EUR)	

Contact details

Project beneficiary name/organisation	
Contact person	
Contact Email	
Telephone	
Other contact details	

Further information

Website	
Additional info sources, links	

Quotes from beneficiaries/participants

(if available) Obviously choose ones that really highlight the key message of the project

“The GLAS scheme has helped to raise my awareness of biodiversity, and has made me examine how the actions I take on my farm can affect biodiversity”

Project photos with information on copyrights

A number of 2-3 photos, as available, would be sufficient. Copyrights maybe the name of the photographer, or in general the owner of the photos' copyrights as indicated by the provider of the project's content.

Additional note

¹ Both a starting and end date are needed.

² On-going projects are not eligible.

³ Always indicate which measure(s) were used.

⁴ Both the Priority & Focus Area are needed for the 2014-2020 programming period projects.

⁵ In case more than one measures where used then please provide the above financial data for all measures involved.

⁶ The total and EAFRD budget are required as a minimum.