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Climate change mitigaton & Environmental care

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Addressing knowledge gaps in environmental and climate protection: Training integration in Poland's CAP SP

Keywords/Tags

- Climate change action
- Training
- Environmental protection

Potential users

- Managing authorities.
- AKIS Coordination Bodies.

RATIONALE

The specific objectives on climate change and environmental care within the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are central to addressing the dual challenges of mitigating climate impacts and protecting natural resources in Europe's agricultural sector. Agriculture is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, and at the same time, it faces increasing risks from extreme weather and environmental degradation. To meet these objectives, the CAP promotes sustainable farming practices such as agroecology, carbon farming, and biodiversity conservation.

AKIS interventions play a key role in enabling the shift towards more sustainable agriculture by ensuring that farmers are not only aware of these practices but are also supported in their implementation. In this sense, the AKIS framework can encourage the adoption of practical climate-resilient solutions fostering the collaboration between researchers, advisory services, farmers, and digital innovation hubs and favoring the increased knowledge on practices.

The Polish CAP Strategic Plan identified a weakness in the the limited knowledge and skills among farmers regarding sustainable agricultural practices and climate adaptation. This knowledge gap could hinder the effective implementation of environmental and climate protection intervention. Moreover, adopting green technologies and resource-efficient practices, such as precision farming, renewable energy, and improved water management systems might have a significant impact in the sustainability of farm practices. However, to capitalize on these opportunities, it is essential that farmers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement them effectively. Training ensures that investments in environmental and climate protection are not just about acquiring equipment, but about using it efficiently to achieve long-term sustainability, contributing to broader objectives like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting the EU Green Deal, ultimately fostering a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.

SOLUTION

The inclusion of training in the Polish CAP Strategic Plan's intervention I.10.4 - "Investments contributing to environmental and climate protection", aims to helps farms to improve knowledge about technical standards to reduce environmental pressures and adapt to climate change, minimizing its negative effects. Key areas include reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing soil carbon sequestration, and promoting biodiversity. The intervention strengthens Poland's implementation of environmental and climate protection schemes under both CAP Pillars I and II. Modern equipment and digital solutions will help farmers implement these measures more effectively, with a focus on climate adaptation, sustainable resource management, and biodiversity conservation.

IN PRACTICE

Under the Polish CAP Strategic Plan has been published a call for applications for the intervention I.10.4 Investments contributing to environmental and climate protection that provides a mandatory training conducted by provincial agricultural advisory centres in the field of "Sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil, air, climate" before the date of submission of the application for contribution or undertakes to complete it before the date of submission of the application for payment. The beneficiaries are:

- **A farmer:** a natural person, a legal person, an organizational unit without legal personality, partners of a civil partnership conducting agricultural activities within a civil partnership,
- **A group of farmers:** that consists of at least three farmers who are natural persons who jointly apply for aid in order to carry out a collective investment for their farms, if they have concluded a written agreement of a group of farmers, the duration of which may not be shorter than 7 years from the date of submission of the application for aid.

The aid is granted for an operation covering investments concerning:

1. Construction of new:
   a. Tanks for storing liquid natural fertilizers.
   b. Plates for collecting and storing solid natural fertilizers.
2. Reconstruction or purchase of tanks or reconstruction of the plates referred to in point 1.
3. Construction or reconstruction of other structures used for agricultural production.
4. Purchase of machinery or equipment used for agricultural production.
5. Construction, purchase or installation of technical infrastructure or equipment directly affecting the conditions for conducting agricultural activity.

The aid will be granted if the farmer meets, among others, a mandatory training conducted by provincial agricultural advisory centres in the field of "Sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil, air, climate" before the date of submission of the application for aid or undertakes to complete it before the date of submission of the application for payment.

Box 1 : Provincial Agricultural Advisory Centres

The Provincial Agricultural Advisory Centres (Ośrodki Doradztwa Rolniczego, or ODRs) are regional institutions responsible for providing agricultural advice, education, and support to farmers. They operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, offering various services to enhance the productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of farms across the country. These centers are integral to implementing the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS), facilitating the transfer of knowledge about innovative technologies, sustainable practices, and environmental protection.

A specific attachment of the call is dedicated to a Declaration of commitment to undergo training conducted by provincial agricultural advisory centers in the field of "Sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil, air, climate" in the context of implementing intervention I.10.4 PS CAP for 2023-2027.

Box 2 : Conditions of eligibility

The complete list of conditions of eligibility provide the following conditions:

1. The owner must be of a farm with an agricultural area of no more than 300 ha.
2. Conducts agricultural activity in the field of plant or animal production on the farm and this activity is not conducted exclusively for scientific and research purposes - the above conditions must be met at least from the date of submission of the application for aid.
3. Is at least 18 years old on the date of submission of the application for assistance – in the case of a natural person or a partner in a civil partnership who is a natural person.
4. Has an identification number in the producer register, assigned in accordance with the provisions on the national system of producer registration, farm register and register of payment applications.
5. Has completed training conducted by provincial agricultural advisory centres in the field of "Sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil, air, climate" in the context of implementing the CAP PS intervention for 2023–2027 "Investments contributing to environmental and climate protection" before the date of submission of the application for aid or undertakes to complete it before the date of submission of the application for payment.

The training is organized by the Agricultural Advisory Centre and it is usually organized after gathering a group of people. The training lasts two days where the first day of training is carried out in the form of a webinar, the second day of training is a trip to a farm (Table 1).

Table 1: Example of a Training program on SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES in the context of implementing the CAP PS Intervention for 2023-2027 "Investments contributing to environmental and climate protection"Framework training program

	Issues to discuss	Number of hours of classes	Working method
	First day of training		
1	**Water Block** 1. Rational water management on the farm (water retention, agrotechnics in improving water management, water use efficiency, water retention, drought resistance). 2. Investments aimed at improving water management: – collection, storage and management of rainwater, – water recirculation, – economical water management. 3. What PS CAP interventions can be used in this area (pillar I and II).	2 hrs	webinar
2	**Soil Block** **Investments aimed at:** **a) reducing the use of plant protection products:** – precise use of plant protection products (e.g. sensor sprayers, recirculation sprayers), – mechanical or biological control of weeds or pests (e.g. hoes, devices for mechanical destruction of pests); **b) increasing soil sequestration and biodiversity:** – strip or no-tillage soil cultivation, – soil protection (e.g. mulching, catch crop seeders), – maintaining field woodlots, agroforestry systems and permanent grasslands; **c) soil cultivation techniques, aggregation of machines.** What PS CAP interventions can be used in this area (pillar I and II).	3 hrs	webinar

3	**Air Block** 1. Poland's commitments to reduce air pollution. 2. Investments aimed at reducing pollutant emissions: – storage of natural fertilizers or silage, – air purification systems from livestock buildings, – low-emission keeping of farm animals (e.g. herd management systems, floor cleaning robots), – reduction of the consumption of mineral nitrogen fertilizers through their more efficient use, soil application techniques for natural fertilizers, fertilizer application using digital solutions. 3. What PS CAP interventions can be used in this area (Pillar I and II).	3 hrs	webinar
4	**Climate Block** 1. The impact of climate change on agriculture, Poland's commitments regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. Investments aimed at adaptation to unfavourable weather conditions: **a) in animal production:** – ventilation and air-conditioning systems for animals, – watering places for animals, **b) in crop production:** – increasing soil water retention through no-till cultivation systems, – strengthening ecosystem services through turfing, woodlots, – increasing micro-retention through rainwater management, – anti-hail nets. 3. What PS CAP interventions can be used in this area (Pillar I and II).	3 hrs	webinar
	Second day of training		
	Familiarizing the final recipients with more than one environmental and climate technology used on the farm within different thematic blocks (water, air, soil, climate). Discussing (and, if possible, presenting its operation) the way a given machine/investment/technology works and its impact on selected elements of the natural environment (soil, water, air, climate). Explaining, by a representative of the visited farm, the practical aspects/benefits of using this technology.	**up to 4 hours**	**visit to the farm/farms**

Source: Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR REPLICABILITY

The implementation of the mandatory training on sustainable management of natural resources should take into account some practical implication:

- **Establishment of Mandatory Training Protocols:** Establish clear guidelines for the mandatory training sessions that farmers must complete before applying for support. This should include the content on sustainable resource management and the role of agricultural advisory centers (or other educational bodies) in delivering this training.
- **Collaboration Protocols with Advisory Centers:** Collaboration with Provincial/regional Agricultural Advisory Centers can be useful to facilitate training and support for farmers.
- **Criteria for Farmer Eligibility:** Define and communicate specific eligibility criteria for individual farmers and groups of farmers applying for the contribution. Ensure that the requirements for legal status, collective agreements (at least three farmers), and the minimum duration of these agreements (7 years) are clearly outlined to avoid confusion during applications.
- **Monitoring Compliance with Training:** Develop a monitoring system to verify that applicants have completed the required training. This may include certificates of completion from training sessions, ensuring that only those with proper training access the funding.

BENEFITS

- Creating synergies between different CAP SP interventions.
- Fostering climate change and environmental care skills in farmers.
- Simple way of checking the criterion.



FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Call for the intervention related to Investments contributing to environmental and climate protection
Training program of the Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań

Poland

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