

# Traditional transhumance in Hautes-Pyrénées - France

**SUMMARY** In France, a large part of the pastureland in the highlands (summer pastures) is accessed by groups of farmers and managed by collective entities (pasture association or municipalities). Under the current CAP programme, these collective land managers may conclude AECM contracts of two forms: The first (SHP02) promotes the sustainable management of permanent grassland and pasture by supporting existing practices. The second („localised“ AECM) consists of more restrictive and targeted obligations in areas restricted to protected areas (wetlands, Natura 2000 sites, etc.). Today, 976 land managers in France have signed an AECM, 80 of which are located in Hautes-Pyrénées.

## Contract Type



PES contracts including AECM

## Public Goods

### BIODIVERSITY

### LANDSCAPE & SCENERY

### CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Field of action



## Basis of Payment



- Action-based
- Result-based

## Involved contract takers



Collective

## OBJECTIVES

- Maintain and rehabilitate open landscapes by maintaining and promoting animal presence (transhumance) in summer pastures
- Maintain and promote the vegetation mosaic and promote the adaptation of the grazing conditions to the specificity of these environments, based on a pastoral management plan

## CONTRACT DETAILS

**Involved parties** The parties involved are the regional authorities and the joint land managers, which are either (i) landowners such as municipalities, grazing associations, groups of municipalities owning undivided land and represented by a special organisation, later called Commission syndicale, or (ii) land users such as grazing groups bringing together livestock farmers using the same summer pastures.

The contract also consists of interlocking contractual arrangements with other pastoral actors. In fact, the AECM fits into a mix of existing institutional arrangements, which can take the form of formal contracts (i.e. with shepherds who will be responsible for the implementation of the management plan) or informal agreements (i.e. with livestock farmers on the dates of the ascent and descent of summer pastures).

Therefore, the contractor (collective land manager) must not be the executor of the contract.

**Conditions of participation & payment** Any entity who is legally constituted and managing common pastoral area is allowed to contract collective AECM, with the following additional conditions:

SHP02: common land managers have to meet a certain number of points that are awarded according to a number of criteria defined by the administrative authority. In the Hautes-Pyrénées, 11 criteria have been defined according to which 80% of the common land were retained.

Localised AECM: The contracted land must be localized in a protected area (Natura 2000, national park or reserves).

Since 2015, common land managers are no longer obliged to redistribute AECM amounts to individual farmers, so the funds are mainly invested to support collective management.

**Management requirements, monitoring & control** Prior to contract a (localised) AECM, common land managers need to organize an agri-environmental survey of their land in order to identify the content of the management plan. Thereafter, the main management requirements consist of maintaining a minimum (and maximum) grazing pressure on the land, avoiding all phytosanitary treatment, recording the interventions and finally testifying that the practices preserve the agro-ecological balance on the engaged surfaces (obligation of result defined by a scraping indicator).

Actions are therefore monitored by common land managers (records of the number of animals grazing in the different „quarters“ of land) and controlled by external dedicated agencies as for all other AECM.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

- Two complementary measures supporting simultaneously the continuation of transhumance to maintain current land use and the change of grazing practices to better integrate biodiversity issues
- Measures based on adapted diagnosis
- Consultation and discussions with all actors involved (pastoral, environmental and territorial actors)
- Collective decision made on the use of AECM funds (redistribution to individual farmers / support collective management or investments).

