



PRACTICE ABSTRACT № 14

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How can Policy Support Collective Approaches?

To tackle the complex challenges of agriculture, nature and the environment more effectively, several studies advocate a shift from an individual farm approach towards a collective approach using a landscape scale as a reference. In this Practice Abstract we synthesise some recommendations for policymakers on how to foster these collaborative initiatives, based on successful examples in Europe.

There are several examples in Europe of farmers working together on the delivery of public goods related to nature and environment. Many of them are local initiatives, rather limited in scope. In those regions where the number and extent of groups is higher (e.g. NL, UK, FR), the influence of an appropriate policymaking has been noticed. In general, these groups consist of (i) local initiatives that have been (ii) stimulated and supported by policy, (iii) with the assistance of an intermediary partner (facilitator/coordinator/advisor).

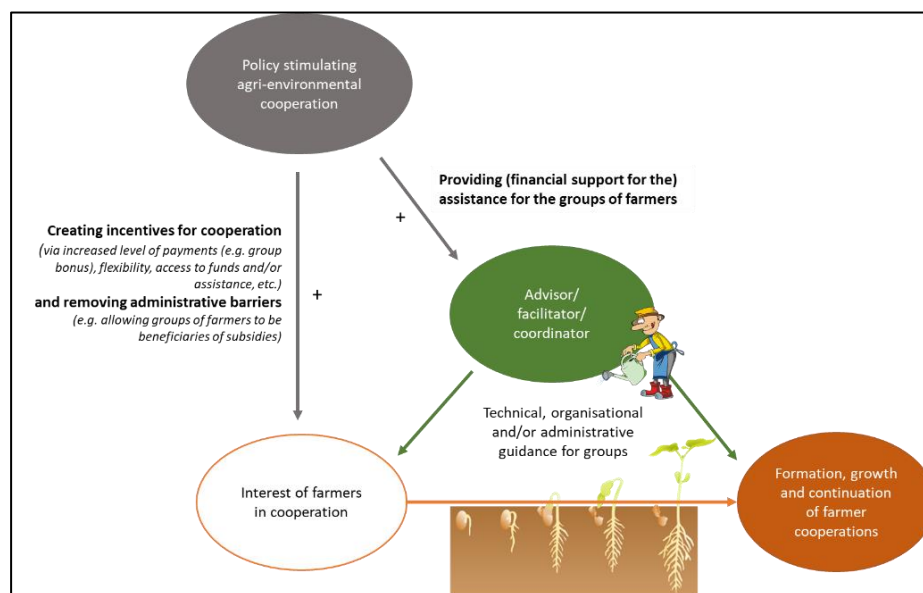
A stimulating policy framework therefore focus on two aspects:

(i) Stimulate interest for cooperation by removing administrative barriers (e.g. allowing groups of farmers to be beneficiaries of subsidies) and creating incentives (more flexibility, guidance, improved access to funds or increased level of payments (e.g. group bonus)).

(ii) provide (funding for) advisory and facilitation of groups of farmers (both in formation and operation), supporting them in sharing knowledge, developing collective plans, monitoring, organizing events, communication, applying for funding.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A more coordinated effort on a landscape scale, in which farmers in a particular area cooperate around certain objectives, can achieve better results in the long term. Collaborations between farmers should be able to grow organically, with guidance from the very start. Guidance is an important incentive for new and existing groups, reducing transaction costs and facilitating social learning between farmers, which in turn creates opportunities for more results-based approaches, giving more flexibility to the farmers on how to achieve certain outcomes.



Policy strategies for fostering cooperation between farmers for the delivery of agri-environmental public goods. (© Sven Defrijn)

ABOUT CONTRACTS2.0

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Contracts2.0 aims to develop innovative contract-based solutions, which increase the motivation for farmers and land managers to produce more environmental public goods and allow them to reconcile the profitability of their farms with sustainability objectives. To do so, 28 research and practice partners closely cooperate to co-design and evaluate the novel contracts. Lessons learned from successfully tested contracts will also provide support for policy makers on local, national and EU-Level.

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Research partners



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