

# New eco-schemes for a greener European common agricultural policy

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[Eco- schemes](#) are payment schemes in agriculture aiming at the protection of environment and climate. They are voluntary agreement between farmers and landowners, and public bodies. Farmers and

landowners are paid if the established environmental goals are reached.

Great hopes are placed in this tool, in fact a quarter of the budget for the [first pillar of Common Agricultural Policy](#) is dedicated exclusively to funding eco-schemes.

Eco-schemes aren't a brand-new tool. They are conceptually similar to the already existing [agri-environmental and climate schemes](#). The main difference is that the latter can only be assigned through a grant procedure, while [farmers](#) are legally entitled to eco-schemes [payment](#). This should make the payment procedure easier and quicker.

Since taking part in the eco-schemes is a voluntary decision of farmers and landowners, it is essential that the bureaucratic and mental burden to take part in these schemes isn't too high.

Studies on agri-environmental and climate schemes applications in Europe show that goals can be achieved with the active participation of the involved actors, particularly the farmers and landowner. However, since the new eco-schemes are not going to replace the old agri-environmental and climate schemes, the risk is to generate confusion among farmers and [landowners](#) on what scheme is what and the differences between these two policy instruments.

Therefore, for the eco-schemes to be successful it is important to have a clear picture of the current situation of their implementation across Europe. It is important to spot and account for strengths and weaknesses of this kind of environmental management schemes. In their paper published in *EuroChoices*, Runge et al. analyze the implementation of eco-schemes in 15 European countries to prevent any backdrops due to different experiences of the member states with agri-environmental and [climate](#) schemes, local environmental preferences, and natural resources settings.

**More information:** Tania Runge et al, Implementation of Eco-schemes in Fifteen European Union Member States, *EuroChoices* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/1746-692X.12352](https://doi.org/10.1111/1746-692X.12352)

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