

EKLIPSE AGRI Protocol Review

December 2017



EKLIPSE

Knowledge & Learning Mechanism
on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

EKLIPSE AGRI Protocol Review December 2017:

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EKLIPSE Review of the Methodological Protocol to assess the uptake of agricultural policy measures that improve biodiversity

Thank you for taking part in the peer-review of the methodological protocol developed by the selected experts working group to answer the EKLIPSE request on “Understanding Farmer Uptake: What measures are most promising to deliver on supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services in the next round of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)?”

The form has two main parts: a "general comments" part, and a “comments by section” part where you can provide more specific comments to each section of the protocol. Where possible, please provide page and line numbers so that we can ensure we match your comments to the text.

Please note the deadline for submitting comments is Sunday 17th December. Thank you very much for your support!

General Comments

Is the text self-explanatory, free of jargon and easy to follow? If not, where do you see a need for language revision, or more clarity? Please specify page and line numbers if possible.

Reviewer x1. easy and self-explanatory	ok
Reviewer x2. Yes. Perhaps the introduction is too brief. It is easy to follow for experts (i.e., policy context) but maybe not so for the general audience.	This document is a methodological protocol, describing the methodology used by the EWG to answer the request. As such, we believe it will be of interest mainly to experts familiar to the policy context but not necessarily for a general audience. Unless there is a specific aspect missing acc. to the reviewer, adding information to the introduction will most likely not adjust readability for a wider audience, and most things are explained more detailed later on in the protocol. No action taken.
Reviewer x3. Yes, the text is very well written, clear to understand.	ok
Reviewer x4. Mostly Yes	ok
Reviewer x5. Yes	ok
Reviewer x6. i find the text clear to understand and self-explanatory and easy to follow.	ok
Reviewer x7. yes	ok
Reviewer x8. The text is self-explanatory, however is not jargon free or easy to follow by people which are not used to read EU documents. Even if there is a list of abbreviations, I do not believe that all the readers are familiar with the meaning of these. Maybe it would be wise to add a glossary as well.	We have discussed the possibility of adding a glossary, but felt this was not necessary at this stage because this document is a methodological protocol, and as such mainly interesting to experts familiar to the EU regulations and the overall policy context. We will, however, keep this comment in mind when writing the report from our work, as we think it will be very relevant there. Whether explanations will be given in form of a glossary, or rather imbedded in the text, we will decide at a later stage.

Regarding the initial request made to EKLIPSE “Understanding Farmer Uptake: What measures are most promising to deliver on supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services in the next round of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with a focus on Ecological Focus Areas”, do you agree with the interpretation of and refinements to the request and the knowledge synthesis framework?

<p>Reviewer x1. Delphi analysis; Farmers dream scenario entirely freely to get more answers; Additional methods: Scenarios. They help to understand the complex questions and help for any discussions in the whole process.</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x2. Yes, but it is not so clear for me how the review of the ecological impacts (on biodiversity) of distinct actual and potential greening measures will be done. Step A is key for the accomplishment of subsequent steps, however, methodological details are less detailed than for the rest of steps. Likewise, I do not find Step A tasks, in particular the review/analysis of greening measures' impacts on biodiversity, in the timeline.</p>	<p>The part A review on biodiversity impacts was not part of the request to the EWG, but already done by EKLIPSE in the request development phase. However, this original review was entirely focused on existing EFA-options. The EWG felt we needed to complement this review with other measures potentially effective for biodiversity. Since this however was not the key focus of the request (which is centered around factors explaining farmer's uptake of measures), and because a number of good review papers exist on this topic, we choose to use these existing papers to add relevant measures relatively quickly. This decision was taken after discussions with the EKLIPSE secretariat. No action taken.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. All proposed measures are promising, but I have some specific remarks to some of them.</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x4. Generally yes. However it is unclear if the focus is EFA or biodiversity promoting measures per se or biodiversity promoting measures in pillar II</p>	<p>Thanks for this comment. We made an additional clarification in the text (Interpretation & refinement-chapter).</p>
<p>Reviewer x5. No.</p>	<p>Ok. Hope for more specific comments below!</p>
<p>Reviewer x6. Yes I agree</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. yes</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x8. Given the initial request, the interpretation and refinements to the request as well as the knowledge synthesis framework are mostly okay. Although there is merit in looking at existing studies and reviews it seems a bit business as usual, since it is never mentioned in the</p>	<p>Thanks for this comment. We agree climate mitigation is an important aspect that certainly will influence various aspects of this topic, among others farmer's uptake. However, both time and resources available to the EWG are extremely limited, making strong prioritization necessary. In this case, the decision to entirely focus on biodiversity was already taken by EKLIPSE during the request development phase. However, we also think that if cli-</p>

<p>report the need to account with climate mitigation and adaptation which are already influencing supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services and will further influence Farmer Uptake.</p>	<p>mate mitigation is perceived as an important factor for farmers, then it will come up during the focus group discussions and interviews conducted in our study, and thus discussed in the final report. No action taken at this time.</p>
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Is the global methodological approach logical, well-formulated and appropriate? Please consider that the budget and timetable of this knowledge synthesis is limited.

<p>Reviewer x1. In view of the limited time frame and the comprehensive scope it is an ambitious project. It need to be considered that sometimes answers will not be strictly on time.</p>	<p>Yes, we agree it's ambitious, which is why we have tried to simplify methods in several steps in the MP. For example, steps perceived as interesting but not crucial are clearly marked as optional. Partly as response to this comment, we have now also decided to simplify the focus group exercises and extend the timeline. However, we feel that the different steps (A, B, C) are necessary for a relevant development of focus group exercises, interview questions or scenarios, and to ensure correct conclusions to be drawn from the study.</p>
<p>Reviewer x2. Overall, it is. In fact, I found this proposal too ambitious for the timetable. The timeframe of this proposal is too short and I found unrealistic to accomplish all the tasks included in this proposal (at least as in deep as intended). Likewise, Figure 2 and Box 1 appear too early in the proposal. They are not clear until you read steps' descriptions, so that I would present these schemes after the methodological details.</p>	<p>See comment above for response to ambitiousness. Concerning the placing of figure 2 and box 1, we had them in the end of the methods section at first, but felt this leaves many open questions when reading the specific method descriptions. In response to this comment, we now moved box 1 to the end of step B. However, we left fig 2 in the beginning, as it gives an overview about the whole methodological framework, incl. steps A and C.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. Yes, however, I have a few remarks.</p>	<p>Ok, responses to any remarks appear there.</p>
<p>Reviewer x4. Generally yes.</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x5. Yes.</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x6. I find the methodological approach logical, well-formulated and appropriate. Not knowing the available time and resources available I find the approach with essential and nonessential methods very appropriate</p>	<p>Ok, thanks.</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. yes</p>	<p>ok</p>

General Comments

Reviewer x8. Considering the timetable and the budget available I think the methodological approach is appropriate.	ok
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For each step/research question, is the combination of methods proposed appropriate and justified?

Reviewer x1. Yes	ok
Reviewer x2. Yes, but I would thank additional details for the (key) Step A.	See response above (Question 2, reviewer x2). We have added a paragraph in the protocol clarifying the situation.
Reviewer x3. Actually, the research questions are not sufficiently highlighted / transparent.	Research questions are clearly highlighted in step B, which is the main part of this study (and the request). In response to this comment, we also added a clarification of purpose of step A. No action taken for step C, as this step is about dissemination and its purpose is already mentioned.
Reviewer x4. No.	Without any details, it is unfortunately impossible to respond here.
Reviewer x5. Yes	ok
Reviewer x6. I found them appropriate and justified	ok
Reviewer x7. yes	ok
Reviewer x8. I think the methods proposed for steps A and B are okay, although for step B the adopted methods are too vague.	Unclear what "too vague" means. Step B is the most important part of this study, but part of the methods (i.e. focus group exercises, interview questions and scenarios) could not be developed thoroughly before the reviews (step A and step B) were done. This may give a vague impression at this point. A proper description of these methods will be available in the final report.

Is there an undue emphasis on one step/research question? If so, how might it be overcome? On the contrary, should one step/research question be looked into more?

Reviewer x1. It seems to be good balanced	ok
Reviewer x2. Yes. Step A deserves more attention.	See response to the same comment above. Clarified in the text.
Reviewer x3. The research questions are not sufficiently highlighted.	See response to the same comment above.
Reviewer x4. No	ok
Reviewer x6. no	ok
Reviewer x7. no	ok
Reviewer x8. I think the understanding of farmer uptake is a very complex question and I think it should be looked into more detail.	We agree it is very complex, which is why we it is important that the exercises and scenarios used during the focus group discussions are developed thoughtfully. As mentioned above, these steps needed input from the two reviews conducted and could therefore not be described more detailed in the protocol yet. Please also note that the timeframe for this project is limited, making it necessary to prioritize.

Are appropriate and up-to-date sources used? Do you know of any additional sources, examples which we could use and where (please be as precise as possible)?

Reviewer x1. the sources are good.	ok
Reviewer x2. Yes	ok
Reviewer x3. Yes.	ok
Reviewer x4. Review of the Ex-post-evaluation of the RDP for the COM (IFIS is involved) Joormann I, Schmidt TG (2017) F.R.A.N.Z.-Studie Hindernisse und Perspektiven für mehr Biodiversität in der Agrarlandschaft. Braunschweig: Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institut, 67 p, Thünen Working Paper 7 http://literatur.thuenen.de/digbib_extern/dn058946.pdf	Thank you for this suggestion. We will have a look and include it in our work where relevant.
Reviewer x5. No. I see here one huge shortcoming, common with ECA report on Greening and IEEP Study [Evaluation study of the payment for agricultural practices	[We do not entirely grasp the focus of this response – is it referring to additionality of payments for similar greening activities? We will potentially consider the effects of

General Comments

beneficial for the climate and the environment] -- THEY ALL IGNORE THE FACT--A HUGE DIFFERENCE OF "GREENING PAYMENTS" BETWEEN EU MS PAID FOR THE SAME PRACTICES BENECIAL FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT.	deadweight and the differences between payments; but without greater refinement to what the reviewer here was referring to we cannot action or respond more fully to this comment.
Reviewer x6. yes	ok
Reviewer x7. yes	ok
Reviewer x8. In general I believe the sources used are mostly up-to-date.	ok

Any further general comments:

Reviewer x6. no	ok
Reviewer x8. As already stated, it is never mentioned in the report the need to account with climate mitigation and adaptation which are already influencing supporting biodiversity and ecosystem services in a non-linear way across different geographic areas across Europe and will for sure influence and conditioned farmers uptake.	See response to same comment above. Please also note that this is a methodological protocol, not a report, i.e. climate mitigation will of course be mentioned in the final report, if it turns out to be an important factor for farmer's uptake, and as a contextual factor for future biodiversity measures.

Are you interested in the further developments of the knowledge synthesis?

Reviewer x1. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x2. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x3. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x4. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x5. Yes, I am interested	ok

Reviewer x6. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x7. Yes, I am interested	ok
Reviewer x8. Yes, I am interested	ok

Comments by Section

Title

Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. I would add “Ecosystem services” to the title: “Methodological Protocol to assess the uptake of agricultural policy measures that improve biodiversity and Ecosystem services”	As described in the refinement section, we will focus on biodiversity due to time- and budget limitations. Therefore, no action taken.

List of Abbreviations

Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. Nothing against, I would recommend a glossary as well.	See response on this above.

Introduction

Reviewer x3. The research questions driving this work could be more highlighted.	Good comment, research questions now included here.
Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

The request

Reviewer x7. ok	ok
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Comments by Section

Reviewer x8. NA	ok
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Interpretation of and refinements to the request

<p>Reviewer x5. The term "biodiversity" is too vague, I would say, watered down, to apply it to a very specific sector as agriculture. I would suggest to use more specific term "agri-biodiversity".</p>	<p>We agree that the term biodiversity in general is a very vague term (although we are not sure that agri-biodiversity is really more precise). However, the request refers to 'biodiversity', as does much of the evidence concerning policy measures, and while more precise definitions can be drawn from these (and will be included in our final report), for now we refer to biodiversity for consistency. Note however our clarification of the use of the term in the section 'Interpretation and refinements to the request'.</p>
Reviewer x7. ok	Ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Knowledge Synthesis Framework

<p>Reviewer x3. I am wondering whether you will pay attention to bottom-up initiatives. Are they going to be integrated in the research framework? I am asking since there could be some innovations on the ground that could potentially improve the EU policy and environmental performance if applied on a wider scale. Currently the approach is very much bottom-up oriented.</p>	<p>Good comment! Since we are very limited in terms of time and resources, we did not plan this specifically, but we will consider possibilities of including this as question in the focus group.</p>
Reviewer x7. a logical approach using 3 spatial scales	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Methodological approach - Introduction & Scenarios

<p>Reviewer x1. line 247: The use of scenarios is very important for a better understanding of what is mentioned. "Farmers dream scenario" should be made with as less limitations as possible, if the timetable allows this. That will cause more answers in depth.</p>	<p>We agree that scenarios are a good way of doing this! We may have to cut down a bit on the number of scenarios we can use, but will make sure to have proper discussions for a "farmers dream". However, we may have to give some kind of limitations (e.g. describe a goal situation) to avoid too unspecific answers.</p>
<p>Reviewer x2. Contextualize Figure 2 and Box 1 before. It is not clear enough the purpose of scenarios until you read methods' details of Step B. Minor point: in Box 1, what's the difference between obligatory and mandatory options?</p>	<p>See response to same comment above. Obligatory vs mandatory concerns whether the specific measures are obligatory or mandatory for farmers to fulfil. AES would be an example for obligatory measures, whereas EFA is mandatory. Clarified in text.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. The construction / selection of scenarios could be improved. For example you are not mentioning whether you are also going to include external drivers or pressures in the scenarios. I can image that e.g. EU mitigation policy or external catastrophes and food price shocks could lead to large changes. Are you going to include such drivers? Another issue is that it would be interesting not only to focus on the scenarios as such but also to ask what variables / factors/ actions drive the choice of a specific scenario and under what conditions or thresholds. It could be then used for ABM. Is there the number of scenarios pre-defined? The "dream" scenario could be perhaps renamed as "best case" scenario. "Dream" sounds colloquial, however, it is fine if it is used in other literature.</p>	<p>As scenario development depends on input from previous steps (i.e. 2 literature reviews), we are at this stage not able to be more precise. We agree that the factors mentioned can influence choices, but due to time constraints we will most likely not be able to include these aspects in the scenarios. On the other hand, if these issues are perceived as important by farmers, they will be mentioned during the discussions and thus be discussed in the report (and could then also be included in ABM, which operates under exogenous variables of this kind).</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. a sensible approach, illustrated well in Figure 2</p>	<p>Thank you!</p>
<p>Reviewer x8. NA</p>	<p>ok</p>

STEP A: Measures effective for biodiversity provision

Comments by Section

<p>Reviewer x2. What are the research questions? Also, additional methodological details are required</p>	<p>Step A is a preparatory step for the main study (Step B), so there are no specific research questions. However, in response to this and other similar comments, we have no clarified the purpose of step A.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. A goal of literature review could also be to verify available quantitative and qualitative data or whether some of them could be reused for some sort of secondary analysis or synthesis.</p>	<p>It could, indeed. However, the main focus of the request was farmers' uptake. Due to time constraints, we could not give high priority to step A. Also, a lot is already done on the effectiveness of measures for BD. No action taken.</p>
<p>Reviewer x5. Without a clear definition of "biodiversity in agriculture" a compilation of the list seems to be problematic.</p>	<p>See response to same comment above; there has been clarification added with regards to Biodiversity in the 'Interpretation' section of the report, and to the Introduction.</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. page 11 refers to different regions of Europe (north, south etc) - could also be categorized by e.g. climate zone</p>	<p>The regions in the MP are meant as examples. We will take this comment into account for the work/report. No action taken at this stage.</p>
<p>Reviewer x8. Could be a bit more developed and the list of publications used could be provided instead of a link to "Conservation Evidence" website</p>	<p>The final methods protocol will include a list of all publications used.</p>

STEP B: Assessment of factors that determine implementation and uptake of biodiversity measures - Research questions and summary table of methods

<p>Reviewer x1. agree</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x2. This summary would result clearer in presented after the methodological details</p>	<p>Unclear which summary is meant, possibly table 1? We left the table where it is, since we think it provides a good first overview of the complex methodology.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. I think in general all presented methods (literature review, focus groups, etc.) would benefit from developing clear guidelines or a list of searched information, e.g. important variables, level of occurrence, outcome. I am wondering how all this knowledge would be synthesized and how to draw conclusions beyond case study evidence. The problem is also that those tools will be</p>	<p>This is a very good comment! We will of course present a more thorough description of the specific methods used in the final report (incl. e.g. search terms for reviews and analytical tools used), however, this was not possible to do in this step yet. We are</p>

<p>applied by various researchers who have a various background. They will be paying attention to various issues. The guidelines or a list of variables they should search for and some more details about the context could help to integrate and process the information. Perhaps using Qualitative Comparative Analysis could be an interesting options.</p>	<p>also very much aware of the fact that we all have different backgrounds and will develop thorough guidelines to make sure everyone is at the same page where necessary.</p>
<p>Reviewer x5. I would suggest to put in opposite order -- starting from a) at farm level, or at least a) MS or regional level. Application of principles "top-down" and "one-fits-all", I mean starting from EU level is doubtful.</p>	<p>This is how CAP currently works: EU level sets frame, MS/regional level selects and farmers can only select from this preselection. We will, however, be open for suggestions from participants in focus groups for other ways of doing this, incl. bottom-approaches if they come up!</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. good</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x8. NA</p>	<p>ok</p>

1. What are the factors influencing the choice of EFA/AECM-types at EU-level?

<p>Reviewer x1. agree; especially consultations with key experts should be undertaken, if possible.</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x4. While it might be worthwhile to reconsider the steps and arguments that lead to certain EFA implementations, it might be more beneficial why some very well understood bottlenecks for the upatke of AECM could not be circumvented (e.g. accurancy requirements for the area delimitation; the problematic legislations on established local practices or pro-rata etc.) In the context of COM's focus on a more result-oriented policy it might be very worthwhile to discuss with an expert group from national and EU admin and ECA how a result-oriented steering mechanism might look like on the intra admin level</p>	<p>We very much agree with this comment, which is why we decided to include both EU and MS levels in the work. We will consider the question "why not" as well if possible with the documents/information available to us. However, we deemed it too difficult to conduct interviews with experts from the EU-level (mainly due to time constraints from both our and the experts side). We have discussed e.g. result-based payments, and might include a question on this in the interviews at MS level.</p>
<p>Reviewer x5. After current EU recommendations on EFAs for catch crops -- to use a mixture of seeds, and ignorance a role of perennial grasses grown on arable land (crop</p>	<p>Do not understand in what way the comment has to do with the MP. No</p>

Comments by Section

rotation) -- please allow me to refrain from answering.	action taken.
Reviewer x7. uses a non-systematic review approach, would appear to be appropriate given the available time	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

2. What were the factors that influenced the selection of EFA/AECM/biodiversity measures by different Member States?

Reviewer x2. I understand that no differentiation will be made under the national level: regions or subregions within member states. Important differences in farming systems can be found not only among, but within countries, specially in those that are large and harbor different biogeographical regions. Perhaps you can try to deal with this selecting a variety of representative agrosystems within countries	We are aware of the fact that the level of implementation differs in different countries (some at national level, some at sub-levels) and have included this in our plans (see e.g. fig 1). No action taken.
Reviewer x4. Assessment of institutional context: Can be done, what does it help if known, the context is not going to change (skip it); the time can be more effectively spend in better elaborating the reasons for the admin. choices made; esp. why certain measures are P1 , P2 only nationally financed or not adressed; esp. admin capacities and national legal framework should be considered; some MS might adress aspects by ordinance law while other by AECM and the third by investment in natural capital	We think a simple assessment as described in the MP is necessary to understand differences between MS, but agree on that this should not be given too high priority. No action taken.
Reviewer x5. I think -- the level of competences of national authorities.	Difficult to assess 😊
Reviewer x7. as above	ok
Reviewer x8. Important question and very relevant since social-economical context of farmers greatly varies among MS.	Agree.

3. Which factors determine famers' uptake of EFA/AECM?

<p>Reviewer x1. economic factors should be proven; The choice of participants is very important. Some groups (farm advisors, framer extension services) are mostly not independent. This needs to be considered.</p>	<p>We agree that the participants for focus groups should be selected with care, but trust in that experts from the different countries are capable of doing so according to some common guidelines.</p>
<p>Reviewer x2. Unclear whether with "greening measures" include or not AECMs. Focus groups will ideally include representatives of different farming systems/regions within countries. Box 2: good point to illustrate how focus groups will work.</p>	<p>"Greening measures" as such do not include AECM, but as described in the Interpretation and refinement section, we will include additional measures that are proven to be beneficial for biodiversity. Due to budget constraints, we are not able to invite farmers from all different systems/regions, but will cover this aspect by inviting farmer representatives who are able to represent and answer for these aspects.</p>
<p>Reviewer x3. I feel more attention should be given to the natural components of the economic and social transactions. E.g. what role does the different production type play, farm size, soil type, water availability, distance to markets, etc? I can imagine the performance of the measures is strongly influences by such factors. It would be helpful to have more details about the focus group organization, e.g. how many per country, will the participants be mixed (e.g. small and big farmers, vegetable and meat production, etc.) or are they going to be organized in homogeneous groups (i.e. only small farmers, only one type of production). Again, to compare the results across the groups, a more detailed list of searched information, variables, etc. would be needed.</p>	<p>Relevant comment, but see response to comment of reviewer x2 above.</p>
<p>Reviewer x4. Question: How might uptake of future options progress, and how might it depend on contextual and socio - economic factors? Method: Agent-based modelling. Skip it. The key problems are frequently other than just the hard economic returns. Here the data is generally insufficient for a quantitative modelling that can be extrapolated.</p>	<p>While we appreciate the reviewer's concerns (and made the ABM non-essential to the MP partly for these reasons), we believe that a combination of methods is the optimal way to assess these things. The ABM is not intended to be used predictively, but rather to explore possible outcomes on the basis of the literature review and focus group responses. No</p>

Comments by Section

	action taken.
Reviewer x5. Practical benefits. Please remember farmers represent one of the poorest part of the society with significantly lower than average incomes.	ok
Reviewer x7. non-systematic review and focus groups are appropriate	ok
Reviewer x8. Complex question which should be explored in more detail.	Agree, but we also need to keep with-in the time and budget frame!

4. How might future uptake of options with positive influence on biodiversity be encouraged, and what is the role of farmers' socio-economic factors in this?

Reviewer x1. a very important question.	ok
Reviewer x2. Agent-based modelling section does not result very clear for me	We have tried to clarify this section and hope the changes address the reviewers' concerns.
Reviewer x3. It would be useful to provide more details on how the information / data flow from one method to another will be used. E.g. will the literature review be used to provide some list of important variables that will be later on assessed in the focus group interviews? The same about the connection between other methods and ABM. It would be useful to integrate this "data flow" plan in the project timeline (p. 20).	Figure 2 (now slightly updated) is a visualization of the data flow between different methods/steps and we believe this should be sufficient for the wider audience. To clarify this, we have now referred to Fig 2 again in this section.
Reviewer x4. Method: Focus group discussions (national experts) , the focus group should not be limited to farmers but also include representatives of different agencies involved in the design and implementation as well as experts on AECM in the 2nd pillar.	The focus group discussions will be done with farmer representatives only, but we will also interview key experts from national authorities. We consciously chose not to mix these groups because they will provide input from different perspectives in we are (in this setting) interesting in slightly different questions. Main focus of the whole request is the farmers perspective, and due to limited time and budget, we need to prioritize this.
Reviewer x5. The answer, from my point of view is	ok

unambiguous -- win-win solutions	
Reviewer x7. unable to comment as i am not familiar with 'agent-based modelling' as an approach. it is justified in the text	ok
Reviewer x8. Farmers' socio-economic aspects are crucial in the adoption of the proposed measures, this might be achieved by actually demonstrate productivity gains.	We agree, and this will be taken into account, partly through the ABM.

Step C - Elaboration of Outputs and Recommendations for the next CAP - Purpose

Reviewer x2. Revise deadlines since some of them (November 2017) are already over	The dates mentioned in the text for this step refer to documents/work done by other than the EWG (namely EU). These dates are still correct. Added parentheses to clarify this.
Reviewer x3. What about consumers are potential stakeholders? E.g. there is a growing number of farmer - consumer networks (e.g. buying meat or vegetables directly from producers). Maybe it would be useful to have some consumer perspectives? What about some initiatives like urban gardening, community gardens, etc. Are they going to be considered too or completely excluded? I am not sure they play an important role, however, their number is increasing, so maybe it is worth to mention/assess them in some context.	Scope of the request restricted to CAP (which does not apply to urban gardening etc.) In case farmer representatives mention consumers as motivation for farmers to select certain measures, this will of course be discussed in the report.
Reviewer x5. In the case if the recommendations are elaborated using bottom-up approach (look answers Step B and No 4) then this purpose may be raised. Otherwise-it is just going to be an ordinary product of bureaucratic machine.	As mentioned in previous responses, the bottom-up approach may likely come up in the discussions with both authorities and farmer representatives.
Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. A bit vaguely explained.	We tried as much as possible to organize this in connection with other ongoing events (national and EU), which were not clear at the time of writing,

Comments by Section

	and so some vagueness is unfortunately unavoidable. We have tried to minimize this as far as we can.
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Methods adopted for recommendations

Reviewer x2. Timeframe and deadlines are too tight and I found them unrealistic. Can you adjust this?	Yes, the timeline will now be adjusted to reflect an end to EWG work in early July 2018.
Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Review of the draft report

Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Final reporting

Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Expected outputs and formats

Reviewer x1. Why not include media releases?	This is a good point and we now plan to include these – MP updated accordingly
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Reviewer x7. good	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Intended timeline

Reviewer x1. seems to be very ambitious	The timeline has now been extended to account for these and similar comments above
Reviewer x2. Too short. Could you adjust this to make it more realistic?	See above.
Reviewer x4. very ambitious	See above.
Reviewer x7. ok	ok
Reviewer x8. NA	ok

Other Comments

Any other comments?

<p>Reviewer x5. I apologise for straight and undiplomatic answers. Let me complement considerations regarding lacking definition of (agri-)biodiversity. First of all, the scientists must answer a question: HOW MANY CROPS (AND DIFFERENT SPECIES) SHOULD ENCOMPASS A CROP ROTATION ALLOWING TO FURTHER DEVELOP WIDER BIODIVERSITY ISSUES. Forestalling implicit simplistic answer I must stress that current Greening's "Crop diversification" requirement seems to be funny and has nothing to do with a real crop rotation. A PROPER CROP ROTATION IS "A MUST", ALFA and OMEGA of SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE. I am sorry, but WITHOUT ANSWERING MENTIONED ABOVE QUESTION -- ALL "THEORETICAL" DISCUSSIONS on BIODIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE ARE HANGING in the AIR.</p>	<p>We appreciate the comment. Concerning the definition of biodiversity, see answers above. Concerning the comments on crop rotation, this is not one of the EFA-measures (and not considered especially beneficial for general biodiversity) and will thus not be recommended in this work.</p>
<p>Reviewer x6. no</p>	<p>ok</p>
<p>Reviewer x7. overall appears to be a sensible approach, i wish the research team well and look forward to the proposed outputs</p>	<p>Thank you!</p>