

# Protection of water and wetlands in the agricultural landscape

Proposed amendments to the Polish Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027 for nature-based practices for water protection, retention and wetland restoration

## Lack of support for the protection and restoration of wetlands in the new agricultural policy for 2023-2027

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for 2023-2027 does not propose solutions in Poland that would encourage the restoration of wetlands (including peatlands) in the agricultural landscape. Moreover, mandatory and optional measures to foster the protection of such habitats are not sufficient. Therefore, this paper presents proposals to amend the principles of conditionality and interventions included in the Polish Strategic Plan for the CAP 2023-2027 and to introduce new interventions aimed at water protection, increased retention and restoration of wetlands in the agricultural landscape.

## Proposed changes to the CAP Strategic Plans 2023-2027

- It is necessary to modify the requirements of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAECs) linked to water and wetland protection (GAEC 2, 4 and 9).
- It is proposed to increase the implementation and payment of the eco-scheme 'Water retention on permanent grassland' and to introduce new eco-schemes: converting arable land to grassland in floodplains, encouraging the creation of buffer strips with limited agricultural use and favouring lapwing breeding on arable land.
- Agri-environment-climate interventions not yet implemented in Poland are proposed to enable the creation of vegetated buffer strips, the conversion of arable fields into permanent grassland, and the rewetting of wetlands degraded by land drainage.

## Benefits of practices for water conservation, retention, and wetland restoration

The benefits of the proposed practices go significantly beyond water conservation objectives, including increased water retention, reduced CO2 emissions from peat soils, beneficial effects on the microclimate or increased biodiversity, among others. In view of these benefits, farms using such solutions must be adequately rewarded - agricultural payments must take into account the value of the ecosystem services they provide.

## General comments and conclusions

In view of the current scale of the environmental impact of farming, the implementation of the proposed, often innovative solutions in agriculture, on the required large scale, is urgently needed. This implies, among other things, the need to undertake educational activities in this regard. The effectiveness of the proposed interventions can be enhanced by introducing their common implementation of interventions. The proposed innovative interventions require clarification of requirements and estimation of adequate payment amounts. Pilot programmes may help with this. The analysis of the cost-effectiveness of implementing the proposed solutions into agricultural policy should take into account the high social acceptance of bearing the costs of wetland restoration and protection.

[Find the full report here \(only available in Polish\)](#)