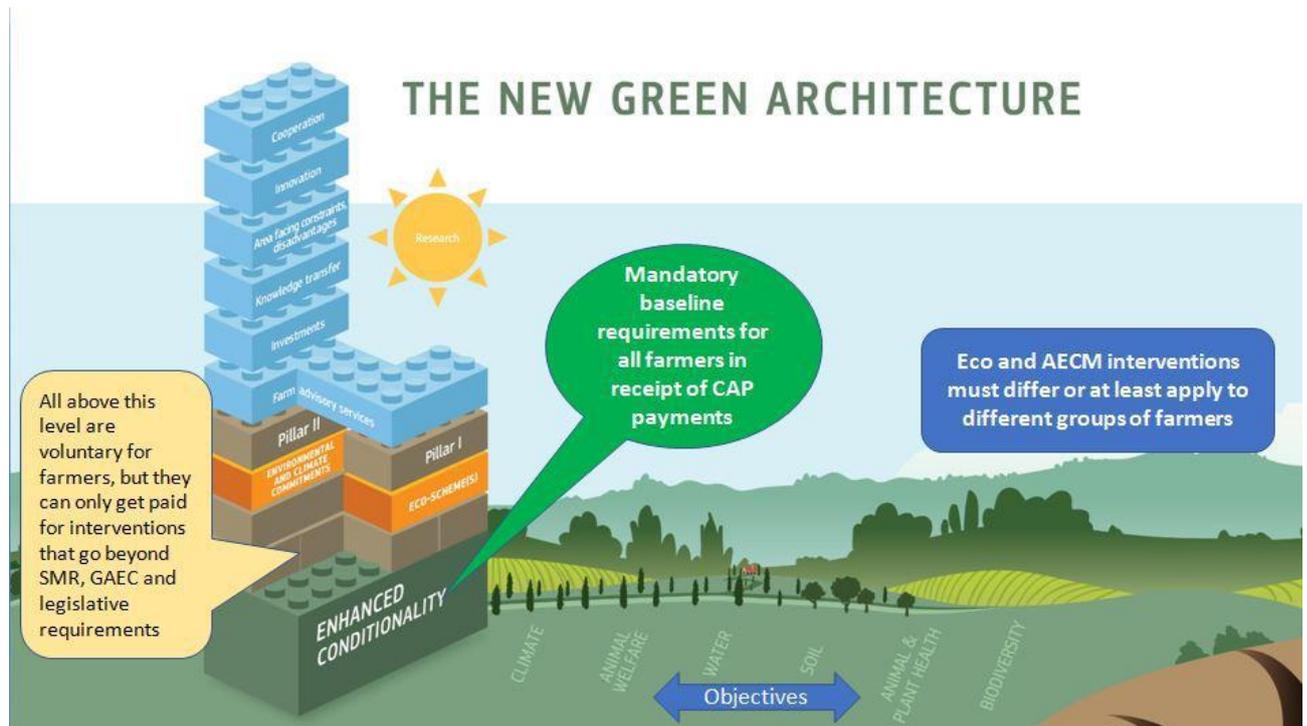


## Discussion Document for the CAP Green Architecture Workshop, 30/09/21

### Background

The term “Green Architecture” was coined by the European Commission to describe the concept of how all elements of the next CAP should combine to create a coherent overall structure that will address each Member States environmental and climate challenges.

There are three elements to the Green Architecture: - Conditionality, Pillar 1 Eco-Schemes and Pillar 2 interventions. These should combine as set out below.



In early 2021 the CAP Consultative Committee considered how to achieve environmental ambition through the Green Architecture for the next CAP. The Committee endorsed the most favourable scenario as proposed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. This scenario was described as: **“Drive significant change through high ambition Pillar 2 interventions with some increased Conditionality and an Eco-Scheme for all farmers”**.

This scenario is considered most appropriate for a situation, as evolved in the final CAP negotiations, where a significant proportion of Pillar 1 must be devoted to Eco-Schemes and there are risks associated with the loss of unspent Eco-Scheme funds. It was also supported by stakeholder comments during two CAP Consultative Committee workshops on the Green Architecture in late 2020.

The three elements of the Green Architecture within this Scenario were described as follows:

#### **Conditionality**

- **Enhanced** environmental protection – increase certain requirements to drive some degree of change on the majority of farms.

#### **Eco-Schemes**

- **Eco-Scheme for all farmers** – assign a significant percentage of Pillar 1 (20-30% likely to be required by Regulation (subsequently set at 25%)). Create an Eco-Scheme(s) that will deliver change through participation by the majority of Irish farmers<sup>1</sup> to each deliver a degree of environmental improvement, thereby providing a substantial impact at national level.

**Note**<sup>1</sup>: or the majority of total agricultural area/the most appropriate agricultural area.

#### **Pillar 2 interventions**

- **High impact** – provide strong budget to support ambitious environmentally focussed interventions that will deliver significant long-term environmental improvement through participation by a significant number of farmers<sup>2</sup> with each making a strong improvement on their farm.

**Note**<sup>2</sup>: or a significant proportion of total agricultural area/the most appropriate agricultural area.

The purpose of today's Green Architecture Workshop is consider the main measures and interventions proposed under Ireland's Green Architecture with a view to establishing whether they are appropriate to achieve the ambition set out above.

Discussion points and questions for the workshop breakout sessions are outlined below under three themes. Each theme will be considered individually.

### **Theme 1 – Getting the basics right – land eligibility and Conditionality requirements.**

Questions for this theme are set out under four discussion points below.

#### **Discussion Point 1**

As set out in the presentation, Ireland proposes that the eligible hectare will allow up to 30% of a parcel to consist of certain features beneficial to climate and biodiversity without any adjustment in the area eligible for payment. Some flexibilities around the need for agricultural activity each year are also proposed as outlined in the presentation.

#### **Question**

Is the proposed definition of the eligible hectare appropriate to address Ireland's needs?

### **Discussion Point 2**

GAEC 7's objective is to preserve the soil's potential. It is based around crop rotation for arable crops, however the legislation sets out other options that Member States may use to achieve the objective. It states *"Rotation shall consist in a change of crop at least once a year at land parcel level (except in case of multiannual crops, grasses and other herbaceous forage, and land lying fallow), including the appropriately managed secondary crops.*

*On the basis of diversity of farming methods and agro-climatic conditions Member States may authorise in the regions concerned other practices of enhanced crop rotation with leguminous crops or crop diversification, which aim at improving and preserving the soil potential in line with the objectives of this GAEC."*

### **Question**

Should Ireland implement arable crop rotation based on a change of crop at least once a year or should Ireland seek to use crop diversification to encourage the growing of a range of arable crops as best suits farm needs?

### **Discussion Point 3**

GAEC 8's objective is to maintain non-productive features and areas to improve on-farm biodiversity. As set out in the presentation, the requirement to have a minimum of 4% non-productive features or areas only has to apply to arable areas; however Ireland proposes to implement it across all agricultural area.

### **Question**

Should Ireland apply this GAEC 8 requirement to all agricultural areas or just arable areas? In addition, at what level should this minimum threshold apply?

### **Discussion Point 4**

As set out above, the objective under Conditionality is to achieve enhanced environmental protection by increasing certain requirements above what is required at present to drive some degree of change on the majority of farms.

### **Question**

Is the combination of measures proposed under Conditionality appropriate to achieve enhanced environmental protection? Will these measures address Ireland's needs?

## **Theme 2 – Eco-Scheme for all farmers**

### **Discussion Point**

Ireland proposes five potential Eco-Scheme practices as set out in the presentation. To receive their full Eco-Scheme payment a farmer will have complete two of these practices in any given year.

### **Questions**

1. Are these practices appropriate to create an Eco-Scheme where all farmers will have the opportunity to select at least two practices that are appropriate to their farm?
2. What level of farmer uptake do you foresee for the Eco-Scheme as presented?
3. Will the Eco-Scheme as presented achieve the environmental change required when it is considered in conjunction with the proposed Conditionality and Pillar II interventions?

## **Theme 3 - High impact environmentally focussed interventions Pillar II interventions and overall coherence across the Green Architecture**

### **Discussion Point**

As set out in the presentation, Ireland proposes a flagship Agri-Environment and Climate Measure (AECM) based on a general menu of options with farmers in higher priority areas having additional bespoke farm/landscape measures available through a local cooperation project team.

As outlined in the presentation, a tranche based entry system is proposed along with a “tiering” system to prioritise certain farmers for entry into the scheme.

The final slide of the presentation lists a number of other Pillar II interventions, along with the Pillar I Protein Aid coupled support. These are all proposed to have a strong environmental focus as part of the Green Architecture.

### **Questions**

1. What are your views around the proposed tiered structure for AECM General? Is there potential to simplify this entry process while still achieving appropriate targeting of the scheme?
2. What level of farmer uptake do you foresee for the AECM General as presented?

3. What level of farmer uptake do you foresee in higher priority areas with additional bespoke farm/landscape measures available through a local cooperation project team?
4. Will the AECM as presented achieve high impact environmental change?
5. How do you foresee the other schemes listed at the end of the presentation contributing to the Green Architecture?
6. Considering all aspects of the Green Architecture that have been discussed, do you believe Ireland is developing a coherent overall approach under CAP to address its environmental and climate needs?