FII Proposals for CAP 2023

1. Background

The value of forestry to Ireland

Forestry and timber deliver enormous value to Ireland and its people across the economy, society and environment. In summary:

- Economic Value: The Forest & Timber Industry contributes circa €2.3 billion to the Irish economy. This is an Export oriented industry, with the value of Exports estimated at €420m per year.
- Rural Jobs: Forestry in Ireland supports 12,000 jobs mostly in rural Ireland. The sector is growing and will double in 15 years; creating thousands of new 'green-tech' jobs. Forestry puts money and jobs into Rural Ireland and Local Communities.
- Building Materials: Our forests provide essential Building Products. Timber is a valuable commodity with many uses including construction timber, pallets, fencing and wood-panels. It is a fully sustainable and renewable product that is becoming more and more relevant as we need to reduce our carbon footprint.
- World Class Industry: The timber industry in Ireland is highly developed and efficient, with some of the most technologically advanced sawmills in Europe. It enjoys close proximity to the U.K. which is the second largest timber importer in the world. This ensures that the very best value is returned from our timber products.
- Climate Change: Forestry helps to combat Climate Change by absorbing CO_2 from the atmosphere. Our forests absorb 5 million tonnes of CO_2 every year and currently sequester over 300 million tonnes of carbon.
- Biodiversity & Nature: Forestry provides rich and important habitats for nature in Ireland. Over 20% of our state forests are managed primarily for biodiversity and over 30% of all new forests are dedicated to increasing diversity in our countryside.

Forest Statistics

- Forested Area – Ireland: 11%
- Forested Area – EU average: 40%
- Forested Area – Finland: 71%

The Importance of Forestry to Farmers

- Diversified Income: Forestry provides a very valuable, consistent and reliable source of income to farmers and landowners. Forestry payments come on top of CAP payments for farmers.
- Valuable Timber Asset: Forestry provides farmers with an excellent lump-sum benefit on clear-fell for retirement or for the education of their children.
- Return from the Land: Investment in a hectare of forestry can yield over €20,000 in net revenue when the crop is harvested, plus the payment of premiums from the state for the first 15 years. This means that forestry can return an IRR of 4% which is favourable to many other land uses.
- Supports Farming: Farmers are currently turning to forestry as a reliable and predictable income stream. It will financially outperform every other farming activity other than dairy. Forestry is actually keeping many farmers in their communities and increasing their viability and that of rural Ireland in creating a sustainable future and diversifying income as well as future pensions.

2. Introduction to forestry and the CAP

Forest Industries Ireland (FII) supports a strong element of forestry, woodland creation and tree planting in the new CAP. The European Commission has called for much greater tree planting under the CAP and has recognised that, to date, the CAP has achieved little in the battle against climate change. For its part, the Irish Government has a stated ambition to plant 18% of the country with trees and achieve an annual afforestation rate of 8,000 hectares.

As discussed below, the current iteration of the CAP has had a profoundly negative impact on the planting of new forestry on farms as farmers have been tied into CAP environment schemes and this has taken away their option to plant forestry. This situation must change under the new CAP.

The forest sector is gravely concerned that forestry has been ignored to date in discussions on the CAP and the forest industry has not been represented on the CAP Consultative Committee.

In addition to providing farmers with the flexibility to plant forestry, the new CAP must go further and create tangible incentives for farmers to plant trees and manage the exiting forestry and woodland on their farms. The environmental benefits of woodlands are well established both in terms of ecosystems and climate change. The priority attached by the EU to these CAP objectives must be reflected in Ireland's CAP schemes. The need to support for woodlands and forestry as a primary vehicle is self-evident.

FII notes that it is a key priority in the programme for Government to achieve better integration between agri-environment schemes and the next National Forestry programme. It is further noted that the EU Farm to Fork strategy details carbon farming, and specifically forestry related activities, as being eligible for inclusion in new eco and environmental schemes in the next CAP.

It is clear that complementary environmental measures in forestry can be funded in the new Eco or Environmental schemes under Pillar 1 and 2 of the new CAP whilst the forestry programme could be delivered under state aid. Integration will be key to the success of both.

Core Principles:

1. Forestry, woodlands and tree planting (both existing and new) must be not only compatible with, but also of real enhancement value to each applicant in the new CAP. Incentives must be built into the CAP.
2. All forestry and woodlands, both existing and new, should be assessed and treated equally, recognizing the need for both commercial and environmental forestry and woodlands.
3. Existing qualification for basic payments on recently afforested land must be maintained ensuring forestry and woodland is viewed as an intrinsic part of the farm.
4. There must be no penalty or repayment of any monies received by the applicant should the applicant's circumstances change, and they wish to convert a greater portion of their holding to forestry and woodland during the duration of the new CAP.

3. CAP, Forestry and EU Climate Action Strategies

According to the European Commission, the new CAP will support the transition towards more sustainable agriculture with increased ambition on climate and environmental actions.

Specifically, the new CAP National Strategic Plans should be designed in line with the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork, Biodiversity, and Forestry strategies and enable them. These strategies underpin the importance of sustainable forestry in realising agreed climate action goals at EU and member state levels.

Under the new CAP, offering eco-schemes will become mandatory for Member States. The new voluntary instrument will reward farmers for implementing climate and environmentally friendly practices such as organic farming or agroforestry.

Green Deal Alignment

CAP Plans will contribute to the targets of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies and will be updated to take into account the changes in the climate and environmental legislation from the European Green Deal. It is likely that it will also contribute to the targets set out in the new Forestry strategy due. According to Commission Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans, "*aligning the CAP with the Green Deal is now possible.*"

Forestry Strategy Alignment

The new Forestry Strategy is designed to build on the new Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and sets out a vision and concrete actions for increasing the quantity and quality of forests in the EU and strengthening their protection, restoration and resilience. The proposed actions will increase carbon sequestration through enhanced sinks and stocks, thus contributing to climate change mitigation. With the new Forestry Strategy, the Commission will be seeking to balance three objectives:

- reducing CO_2.
- preserving natural habitats for biodiversity; and
- sourcing raw materials to replace fossil fuels used for energy.

The EU Forest Strategy aims to improve the quality, quantity and resilience of EU forests. It supports **foresters and the forest-based bioeconomy** while keeping harvesting and biomass use sustainable, preserving biodiversity, and setting out a plan to plant **three billion trees across Europe by 2030.**

The Strategy **commits to strictly protecting primary and old-growth forests, restoring degraded forests, and ensuring they are managed sustainably** – in a way that preserves the vital ecosystem services that forests provide and on which society depends.

The Strategy also foresees the development of **payment schemes to forest owners and managers for providing alternative ecosystems services**, e.g., through keeping parts of their forests intact.

The Forest Strategy also includes a legal proposal to step up forest monitoring, reporting and data collection in the EU. Harmonised EU data collection, combined with strategic planning at Members States' level, will provide a comprehensive picture of the state, the evolution and the envisaged future developments of forests in the EU. This is paramount to making sure that forests can deliver on their multiple functions for climate, biodiversity and economy.

The forest sector is concerned that the Irish government is paying little attention to the European Commission's calls for more effective climate change measures under the CAP and calls for the CAP to stimulate greater tree planting across the EU. FII is in conversation with the European Commission to express its concerns in this regard.

European Green Deal – Fit for 55

As part of its Fit for 55 package to implement the European Green Deal, the European Commission has proposed legislation to review and revise the Regulation on Land Use, Forestry and Agriculture (LULUCF).

Under current EU legislation adopted in May 2018, EU Member States must ensure that accounted greenhouse gas emissions from land use, land use change or forestry are balanced by at least an equivalent accounted removal of CO_2 from the atmosphere in the period 2021 to 2030 (the so-called "no debit rule"). The LULUCF Regulation implements the October 2014 agreement between EU leaders that all sectors should contribute to the EU's 2030 emission reduction target, including the land use sector.

Among others, the Regulation is designed to **support foresters through greater visibility for the climate benefits of wood products, which can store carbon sequestered from the atmosphere and substitute for emission-intensive materials.**

Under the revision, the Regulation on Land Use, Forestry and Agriculture sets an overall EU target for carbon removals by natural sinks, equivalent to 310 million tons of CO_2 emissions by 2030. By 2035, the EU should aim to reach climate neutrality in the land use, forestry and agriculture sectors, including also agricultural non-CO_2 emissions, such as those from fertiliser use and livestock.

The new CAP, amongst others, provides a real opportunity for joined up thinking across the EU climate action strategies, to provide targeted support for farmers in sustainable forestry activities and as a vehicle to help facilitate the objective under the Forestry Strategy to plant three billion trees across Europe by 2035**.**

4. Need to integrate CAP with the Forestry Programme

In order to achieve the multiple national and EU objectives, not least climate change mitigation, forestry activities must be clearly supported and integrated into the new CAP. The current lag in the afforestation programme has brought into sharp focus the need to dramatically change the way in which Ireland's agriculture and forestry policies are implemented. The most important step in this process is to integrate forestry into all elements of the new CAP.

The existing CAP (particularly the environmental schemes) has driven a wedge between forestry and other land uses. Farmers have perceived forestry and other land uses as being in direct competition as there is no effective integration. This is borne out by the current low afforestation programme in which it is estimated that farmers accounted for less than 40% of the area afforested in 2019. Furthermore, it is now known that the number of farmers that afforested during the duration of GLAS dropped from 852 in 2015 to 100 in 2020 - an 88% drop. This drop in farmer planting is directly linked to its exclusion from GLAS, as well as the licencing debacle. GLAS and afforestation were in direct competition. The lack of integration of forestry into CAP has resulted in both the farming community and the forestry sector suffering. An analysis of the total area of land sterilised to afforestation due to the terms and conditions of GLAS should be undertaken immediately. This analysis also needs to determine the number of farmer participants in GLAS that afforested a part of their holding during the term of GLAS. The technical reasons as to why land was sterilised to afforestation are well understood by all, indeed this mistake has been continued in the REAP scheme. The quantification of this needs to be detailed and understood to ensure such mistakes do not occur in the next CAP. This is essential as data suggest the following:

- Sheep farmers accounted for 52% of GLAS participants.
- Cattle farmers accounted for 37% of GLAS participants.
- Dairy farmers accounted for just 13% of GLAS participants.
- The total area of low-input permanent pasture action in GLAS was 249,757 hectares.

Low impact permanent pasture would be a major competing land use with forestry, and this has to be taken into account.

5. The climate change imperative

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine stated that, "*Afforestation is clearly the largest opportunity in the land use sector to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere*". It is also the Minister's stated intention to have as many farmers as possible in the eco and environmental schemes in the next CAP. This indicates the importance of getting CAP right for the benefit of climate change.

Significant changes are necessary to achieve 8,000 hectares planting per year. The COFORD Council is currently preparing a range of papers which examines the important role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that forestry and tree planting are recognised worldwide as vital in combatting climate change. Currently, our forests contain 312 million tonnes of carbon and absorb an additional 5 million tonnes of CO_2 annually. We currently have a forest estate of 777,000 hectares. If we can achieve an annual afforestation programme of 8,000 hectares, we will create a million-hectare forest estate by mid-century and will have added one million tonnes of carbon to the sequestration in our forests and woodlands. This should be the goal and the CAP will play an pivotal role in achieving this.

All schemes in the next CAP should contain attractive forestry options for farmers and landowners. Forestry should be integrated to provide an ideal partner, not competitor, delivering social, environmental, and economic benefits to both the agricultural industry and wider society. Forestry is recognised as being our most significant potential carbon sink. In addition, our forests contribute to Ireland's renewable energy targets, our national biodiversity, recreational facilities, water protection and flood prevention.

6. Active participation of foresters in the new CAP

Ireland will not meet its forestry policy ambitions or mitigate its agricultural emissions without forestry providing a strong element in CAP 2020. This will satisfy much of the requirements of the CAP relating to carbon farming and green investment. The European Commission consistently points to the importance of using the CAP to promote tree planting across the EU .

To ensure the core principles are delivered upon, there must be consultation with professional foresters in the development of the Eco Scheme and the ACEA. Management of existing forestry and woodland and the creation of new woodland will frequently present the best option on parts of the farm. The professional forester must be involved in preparing an appropriate plan outlining the objectives and deliverables.

Professional foresters can advise on involving planting along riparian margins, to act as carbon sinks and interceptors of nutrients such and should be involved in any training and support provision to Agricultural consultants and farmers in the roll out of this scheme and the existing REAP scheme.

Professional foresters must be involved in any training programmes in the new agri environmental schemes focusing on the benefits of trees to climate change, biodiversity, sustainability.

7. Specific requirements for forestry, woodlands and tree planting in CAP

There are a number of prerequisites and requirements that will underpin success of woodland measures in the next CAP:

- Retain eligibility for BISS under prevailing conditionality.
- Flexibility is key. There must be no penalty to farmers for diverting to forestry from other schemes during the duration of the next CAP.
- Increased flexibility across all schemes for farmers and landowners in relation to forestry is an absolute must.
- DAFM should use a single mapping system for forestry combining with BISS, Agri environmental schemes etc, in order to eliminate mapping issues affecting/delaying owners' payments.
- Integrate the forestry programme with new agri environmental schemes in both pillar 1 and 2.
- Forestry incentives should be included in other schemes relating to:
  - Farm regeneration/supports for young farmers.
  - Water quality
  - Emissions and Organic Farming
- Forestry consultants must be involved in areas such as:
  - Knowledge transfer schemes across all enterprises
  - Environmental training programmes

  - Training of Advisors initiatives
  - AKIS activities
  - Farmer training and Health and Safety initiatives
  - Baseline measurements of biodiversity initiatives
  - Carbon Navigator
- ANC payments must be payable on areas to be afforested in designated ANC areas
- Any redistribution of entitlements value must incentivise forestry as part of the redistribution.
- A Woodland Environmental Planning Grant is required to neutralise upfront costs for farmers and landowners considering afforestation.
- Frontloading of payments to be conditional on afforestation of a part of the farm. Such an upfront payment to be based on carbon sequestration potential. The Woodland Environmental Fund is a good example of the benefits of an upfront payment to farmers.
- Review afforestation grant and premium rates in line with the current real-world costs and labour availability and alternative land uses.
- A fit for purpose reconstitution scheme is required to deal with natural occurrences that are not insurable against.
- All Mandated grants such as afforestation, forest road, woodland improvement, should not be subject to attachment orders where the person/entity the grant is mandated to is tax compliant.
- Existing forestry support measures to be retained but brought into line with the current real-world situation.
- Re-imagine the design of the Agro forestry scheme to work in an Irish situation
- Newly afforested areas to be eligible for Nitrates calculations

8. FII Proposals for CAP

The most appropriate actions on any given farm can be selected from a suite of measures by the landowner and the forester. This, in turn, determines the payment the landowner receives under the new schemes.

Should there be **priority entry criteria** for entry into Eco or Environmental schemes, FII suggest the following options for priority entry criteria are necessary.

- Take up one of the options on the attached “Forestry and Woodland Creation and Tree planting” scenarios on the proposed action tab
- Take up one of the options on the attached “Existing Forestry and Woodland” scenarios in the proposed actions tab
- Secure Forest Management Certification to FSC and PEFC standard on existing forestry and woodland.

New forests and woodlands should be planned by the farmer, the agricultural consultant and the forester. The forester can provide long term advice and planning for the farm in a structured manner. This will result in enhanced farm resilience as output from forests and woodlands can provide both income security and localised protection in times of extreme weather conditions.

The importance of 'triggers' in the CAP

The concept of having 'triggers' in the CAP that incentivise farmers to look at the forestry option is critical. There will have to be very specific criteria or incentives or entry requirements that suggest to the farmer that they could look to forestry. Triggers or entry qualification criteria for the Eco Scheme and the AECM will have to be developed and implemented.

The CAP will be a major deciding factor in whether the country can reach its annual afforestation target of 8,000 hectares, Furthermore, the EU is seeking to use the CAP to combat climate change and increase biodiversity through the planting of trees and the management of forests and woodlands.

Professional foresters should be involved in all instances where tree planting takes place on farms and in any instance where training or support to farmers relating to environmental and climate mitigation aspects of forestry is being extended to farmers from advisors.

Without effective triggers and incentives built into the CAP, the link between forestry and land use decisions under the CAP will continue to be broken.

Pillar I

Extract from CSP consultation document

Pillar I Eco-Schemes
New voluntary annual agri-environmental schemes, known as Eco-schemes, will strengthen the environmental and climate outcomes achieved by Pillar 1 payments, by building on baseline improvements achieved through conditionality.
While allowing for some flexibility, the Regulations require at least 25% of the Pillar I CAP budget to be devoted to Eco-Schemes. Ireland proposes to introduce an Eco-Scheme "for all farmers" with the objective being to maximise farmer participation to achieve climate and environmental improvements across all farmed lands.

Purpose
The aim of this intervention is to provide additional direct income support to farmers for undertaking actions beneficial to the climate and the wider environment. Ireland's SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment identified several issues relating to climate change, the unsustainable use of natural resources, and the degradation of habitats and landscapes. Eco-schemes are intended to address these needs.

Proposed Structure
This intervention will be implemented annually, with farmers having the opportunity to opt in or out on an annual basis. Farmers will apply through the BISS application from 2023 onwards. The "agricultural practices" or actions that constitute the Eco-Scheme will be over and above conditionality requirements.
The scheme will be implemented through targeting of relevant "agricultural practices" and will provide the opportunity for as many farmers as possible to take up the most appropriate actions or intensity of actions on their farm. The scheme will seek to maximise the benefits for the environment and may include actions that will contribute to:
1. climate change mitigation, including reduction of GHG emissions from agricultural practices, as well as maintenance of existing carbon stores and enhancement of carbon sequestration.

Proposed action for trees, woodland and hedgerows under Pillar I Eco Scheme

Introduction

The Pillar I eco scheme has a number of objectives that can be met by the introduction of a specific action for the assessment, protection, improvement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and their augmentation with additional planting.

The Department estimates that €297 million will be paid annually to farmers through the Pillar I Eco Scheme.

Proposed action No. 1: Farm woodland and hedgerow audit and advisory

This action would involve carrying out a complete audit of all farm trees, woodland and hedgerows by a registered forester. The forester would provide a report to the farmer with advice on how to maintain and manage the existing woodland and trees on the farm.

The purpose is to enable the farmer to manage the wellbeing for trees on the farm, manage for biodiversity, ensure healthy ecosystems and water quality, and assess the farm for further woodland creation opportunities.

Rationale:
The proposed action will contribute to many of the stated objectives of the Pillar I Eco Scheme including:

- Climate change adaptation
- Water quality
- Soil protection
- Protection of biodiversity and habitats
- Creation of landscape features

Detail of actions to be included:

Proposed action	Species	Benefits accruing to:
Assess farm for forestry and woodland creation potential	Conifer and broadleaf	Biodiversity, Climate change mitigation
Determine the number of hedgerow Ash on the farm	Ash	Biodiversity, Preserve landscapes
Determine the area of Ash plantation infected by Ash dieback on the farm	Ash	Biodiversity, Climate change mitigation
Assess forestry and woodland on the farm for achievement of Forest Management Certification to FSC and PEFC standards	All species	Social, environmental and economic sustainability
Assess organic farming opportunities on the farm and associated organic forestry opportunities	All species	Climate change mitigation, Animal welfare
Assess existing forestry on a farm and prepare a regeneration or restructuring or other management plan as appropriate	All species	Biodiversity, water, soil, climate change mitigation

This is principally aimed at forestry or woodlands not in receipt of annual forestry premia		
Determine area of overmature Christmas tree plantations on farms	Conifers	Biodiversity, water, soil, farm income
Determine area of existing groves or such woodland on the farm	Conifer and broadleaf	biodiversity, water quality, farm income
Determine locations for hotspot planting to mitigate leaching	Conifer and broadleaf	water quality, enhance ecosystem services
Determine area of forestry or woodland designated as Hen Harrier SPA	Conifer and broadleaf	biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services
Determine area of forestry or woodland in a designated area for the Fresh Water Pearl Mussel	Conifer and broadleaf	biodiversity, water quality, farm income
Determine opportunities for rewilding of existing forestry on farms	conifer and broadleaf	biodiversity, water quality, preserve habitats
Assess opportunities for securing brash from conifer clear-fell on farms for animal bedding	conifer and broadleaf	animal health, efficient use of natural resources
Assess the farm for invasive plant species	invasive species	biodiversity, farm income, preserve habitats

Pillar II

Extract from CSP Consultation document:

(1) Agri-Environment Climate Measure (AECM)

Purpose

The aim of this intervention is to deliver a range of environmental, climate and biodiversity benefits by supporting farmers to undertake appropriate actions . The nature of the actions will be determined by the needs of the land and environs.

The SWOT Analysis and Needs Assessment identified numerous challenges emerging as a result of climate change, the unsustainable use of natural resources and the degradation of habitats. The national agri-environment climate measure accordingly consists of actions to address these biodiversity, water, soil and climate challenges. The underpinning principle for the scheme will be 'the right action, in the right place', in order to ensure effective targeting of measures to deliver biodiversity, water and climate action in an integrated manner on farms. The integration of results-based actions and the locally led approach into this flagship agri-environment scheme will build on the success of the Burren Programme and the European Innovation Partnership – AGRI Groups delivered under the RDP 2014-2020.

Proposed Structure

Any eligible farmer in any part of the country will have the opportunity to participate in the general scheme. Participating farmers will be required to address priority assets (e.g., critical source areas for water, priority habitats) on their farms (similar to previous agri-environment, climate measures). These will constitute the basic actions required for entry into the scheme. It is intended that these

actions will be a combination of prescription-based measures (at a fixed rate of payment) and results-based measures (where the level of payment is based on the results achieved). The scheme will take a landscape approach and may mean that farmers in areas identified by the Department as having higher environmental priorities will participate in specific co-operation actions. Such actions may attract higher payments depending on the actions required

Any additional bespoke farm/landscape measures required will be implemented with the assistance of a Local Project Team at local level. This co-operation element will support a landscape approach in these areas for the management and restoration of priority habitat/species, carbon storage, water quality, and biodiversity through improved land management and resilience. It is also expected to positively impact on problems facing these landscapes, for example landslides, flooding, mountain fires, management of commonages, invasive species, predator control, etc. The eligibility to participate in these will be clear from the application phase, with farmers' lands falling in defined co-operation areas able to avail of these additional supports.

Given the climate imperative of proposed actions under the next CAP, there will be a dedicated and attractive action for farmers under this intervention for land re-wetting. This may be one of the cooperation measures, or a separate action under this measure. Similarly, ***significant tree-planting measures will be included here, including agro-forestry and riparian planting. This will help deliver co-benefits, along with climate, for water quality and biodiversity. Mandatory planting of broadleaf trees on some farms may also be included.***

Farmers who choose to participate in the AECM will have one agri-environment climate measure contract only. Results based approaches will be used, where appropriate, and support for non-productive investments will be provided when necessary to help improve habitat scores.

Proposed actions for forestry, woodland creation and tree planting under the AECM

Introduction

The planting of trees, woodland and forestry on farms will provide climate, biodiversity and habitat benefits in line with the ambitions of the AECM.

The consultation document for the CSP notes, "*significant tree-planting measures will be included here, including agro-forestry and riparian planting. This will help deliver co-benefits, along with climate, for water quality and biodiversity.*"

Proposed action No.2: Forestry and Woodland Creation and Tree planting

The proposed action involves the planting of new woodlands and forestry on farms. The specific type and structure of woodlands to be planted can be determined by the location, soil type and other factors of the specific farm.

The action should be fully integrated with the national forestry programme and the national policy to increase the proportion of the country that is forested to 18%.

It must be borne in mind that the current annual afforestation rate is not much more that 2,000 hectares per annum while the target rate is 8,000 hectare per annum. This demonstrates the clear need for additional actions to increase the rate of farm afforestation in Ireland.

The European Commission has been explicit in its calls on EU Member States to increase woodland creation under the CAP, having been disappointed at the level of climate change action under the current and previous CAPs.

The Department of Agriculture has conducted extensive research into climate change actions in Irish agriculture and has concluded that the potential abatement from forestry and woodland is greater that all other agriculture measures combined.

The recent Teagasc Forest Carbon Tool defines the level of carbon sequestration that can be achieved with new forestry and woodland. For example, new GPC 3 afforestation will sequester 5.63 tonnes of CO2 per hectare per annum, or 327 tonnes of CO2 over two crop rotations.

Rationale:
The proposed action will contribute to many of the stated objectives of the AECM including:

- Climate change mitigation
- Carbon storage
- Biodiversity and habitats
- Water quality
- Soil protection

Detail of actions to be included:

Forestry and Woodland Creation and Tree planting		
New afforestation projects - in conjunction with any afforestation scheme	Broadleaf and conifer	Soil, water, Carbon sequestration, farm income
Organic Forestry and Woodland Creation	Broadleaf and conifer	Animal health, farm income, water, soil
Native conifer forestry or woodland creation	Yew, Scot's pine, Juniper	biodiversity, preserve habitats and landscapes
Shelter belt forestry	Broadleaf and conifer	Animal health, landscape, food, water, carbon seq.
Agro Forestry	Broadleaf and Conifer	Carbon sequestration, Animal health, farm income
Hotspot planting adjacent to watercourses to mitigate leaching	Broadleaf and Conifer	Water quality, carbon sequestration, farm income
Hedgerow landscaping to counteract Ash dieback disease	Broadleaves other than Ash	Landscape, preserve habitats, climate change mitigation
Individual specimen tree planting	Broadleaves and Conifers	Landscape, animal health, climate change mitigation
Tree landscaping around farmyards and buildings	Broadleaves and conifers	landscape, water quality, air quality
Social forestry	Broadleaf and conifer	Human health

Convert overmature Christmas Tree plantations to Native Woodland	Broadleaf and conifer	Biodiversity, water, Carbon sequestration
Riparian planting and fencing along riverbanks	broadleaf and conifer	Biodiversity, water quality, air quality

Proposed action No.3: Management, regeneration and restructuring of existing forestry and woodland

The proposed action involves improvement works to existing forestry and woodland.

Many woodlands will benefit from interventions to improve the benefits they deliver for the environment, habitats and biodiversity.

The specific actions would be dependent upon the nature of the existing woodland and the benefits being sought in each case. These could relate to specific species such as hen harrier or freshwater pearl mussels or could be more general actions to promote biodiversity or other benefits such as the harvesting of brash as a renewable resource for use on the farm.

Forest and timber certification is a well-recognised requirement in Ireland as the proportion of timber coming from the private estate increases. There is a need for this timber to be certified, In addition, the certification of woodlands under FSC and PEFC is a very rigorous process which ensures that woodlands are managed to the highest standards and achieve optimal environmental outcomes. The CAP is an ideal mechanism to facilitate many more Irish woodlands being certified.

Rationale:
The proposed action will contribute to many of the stated objectives of the AECM including:

- Climate change mitigation
- Carbon storage
- Biodiversity and habitats
- Water quality
- Soil protection

Detail of actions to be included:

Existing forestry and woodland		
Regenerate/restructure existing forestry and woodland	Conifer and broadleaf	Water quality, carbon sequestration
		Increased retention of existing habitat
Secure Forest Management Certification to FSC and PEFC standards	Conifer and broadleaf	Social, environmental and economic sustainability
Stock proofing existing groves or woodlands to enable natural regeneration	Conifer and broadleaf	biodiversity, carbon sequestration
Restructure forestry and woodland in Hen Harrier areas	Conifer	Hen Harrier

Implement actions in forestry beneficial to the Fresh Water pearl Mussel	Conifer and broadleaf	Fresh Water Pearl Mussel
Implement actions for rewilding of existing forestry on farms	Conifer and broadleaf	Biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services
Secure brash from conifer clear-fell for animal bedding	Conifer	substitute for peat in animal bedding
Implement eradication/control measures on invasive plant species		Biodiversity, Farm income
Attend training on management of biodiversity and environmental enhancement and rehabilitation in forestry and woodland	Conifer and broadleaf	Biodiversity, water quality, farm income
Replace infected Ash dieback infected plantations with native species or minor conifer species	Conifer and broadleaf	Biodiversity, carbon sequestration, farm income