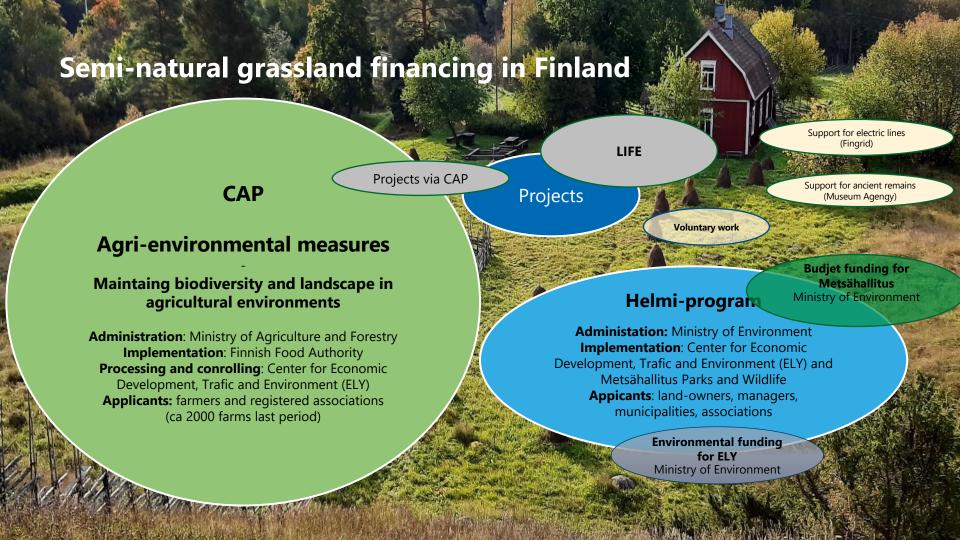


FARMING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK
TO STIMULATE RESTORATION AND
MAINTENANCE OF BOREAL
GRASSLANDS

Country report Finland

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CAP generally

CAP 2023-2027 ca 10,28 billion:

- Direct payments 2 613 M€
- National funding 1 740 M€
- Sector measures 24,9 M€
- Rural development, mainland 5 846 M€
- f.e. agri-environment payments and non-productive investments 1 013 M€
- Rural development, Åland 42 M€



Conditionality

- EU rules: statutory management requirements (SMR)
- EU standards: good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC)
- National legistration

Maintaining permanent grassland

- If the national reference ratio of permanent grassland decreases by 5 %, a restoration procedure is introduced.
- Permanent grasslands are not allowed to to changed into other use.

National condition

• After 2022, the requirement for permanent grassland in the area converted to agricultural land (other than turf lands)

Ecoschemes

- 1. Plant cover during winter (50 €/ha)
- 2. Natural treatment for a field (65 €/ha)
 - old cultivated grassfield or sown seed mixture
 - Mowing min every second year
 - grazing and collecting hay are allowed
 - No fertilizers or plant protection chemicals
- 3. Green manure field (80 €/ha)
- 4. Diversity plants for fields (300 €/ha)
- Farmer choose 1-4

Agri-environmental measures (rural development)

1. Farm-specific measure

- a) The general requirements:
 - Fertility study of soils
 - Notes on the cultivation operations block by block
 - Climate and environment plan for the farm

- b) Optional procedures:
 - Climate and environment education
 - Perennial strips for biodiversity
 - Soil monitoring
 - Organic nutrients
 - Pollinator food plants
 - Exact/spot farming methods
 - Indentification applications of plant pests and diseases

Crops and grass 45 €/ha Garden plants and cumin 113 €/ha

Åland islands has own regulation

Agri-environmental measures (rural development)

Block specific measures:

- 2. Soil improvement and rehabilitation plants (190 €/ha) 10. Maintaining biodiveristy and landscape in
- 3. Collector plants (97 €/ha)
- 4. Promotion of the circular economy (37 €/ha)
- 5. Protection zones of the fields (350 €/ha)
- 6. Growing grasses on peat fields (100 €/ha)
- 7. Management of runoff waters (77 €/ha)
- 8. Alternative plant protection of garden plants (500 €/ha)
- 9. Bird fields (600 €/ha)

Agreements

- agricultural environments (460 or 610 €/ha)
- 11. Wetland management (500 €/ha)
- 12. Breeding native of breeds
- 13. Growing of native plant species and varieties

Other measures

- 14. Gene storage of native breeds
- 15. Backup collection of native plant species and varieties

Aland islands has own regulation

Direct payments – Basic income support

- Permanent grassland

- Grasses and other forage plants include such species that are traditionally grown on natural pastures and are included in seed mixtures for cultivated grassfields, pastures or meadows.
- More than 50 % of the area must be covered by official forage plant species
 - Carex-species are not included as forage plants
 - → Carex-species are typical species for coastal meadows in good conservation status

• Trees < 50 / hectare

2018 Finland:

Permanent grassland 175 001 hectares

Total agricultural area 2 288 568 hectares

Investments

 Non-productive investment payment are not available for grasslands anymore, but can be applied for building an agricultural wetland

Organic production



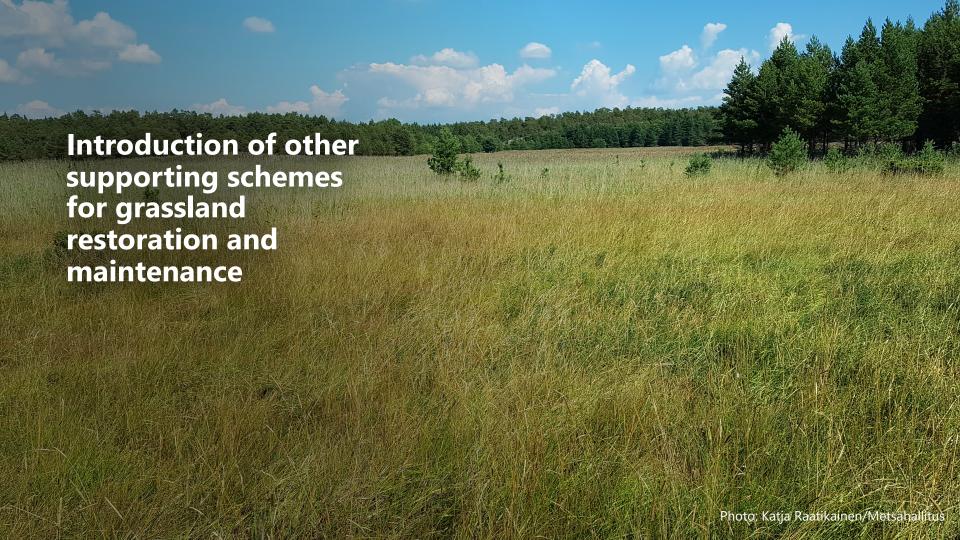
Maintaing biodiversity and landscape in agricultural environment

- S-e grasslands (open meadows, semi-open wooded meadows & pastures and grazed woodlands) and natural pasturelands
- Agreement for 5 years (1.5.->)
- Yearly actions covered:
 - grazing
 - moving and collecting hay
 - maintenance tree clearings
- 1-year actions:
 - Restoration tree clearings
 - Fencing or fencing against wolves and bears

Farmers and registered associations can apply

Maintaing biodiversity and landscape in agricultural environment

- Management plan is required
- Payment levels
 - Nationally and regionally valuable semi-natural grasslands (610 €/ha)
 - Other semi-natural grasslands and natural pastures (460 €/ha)
- Extra payments for 1-year measures can be applied once
 - tree clearings 450 €/ha
 - Fencing (1500 €/ha) or fencing against predators (2 400 €/ha)
- Target 46 000 hectares by 2027
- Field surveys of all payment areas are carried out by the agricultural authorities during the first two years
- The accuracy of eligible area is 10 x 10 metres.



Helmi-program – national support for grassland restoration

Implements the Environmental legistration since 2020

- National support system for the restoration of traditional biotopes has been created by the ministry of environment to implement the Helmi programme
- Aim of this support is to increase the grassland area to be managed with CAP's agreements

Helmi support is not euros, it is done work or material

- Aim was also to create an easy-to-use restoration aid, but
- EU's state aid regulation & procurement regulations do not allow agile operations
- As the new CAP season started, problems have also been encountered with the extent to which the restored sites are suitable for environmental agreements.

CoastNet LIFE 8/2018-3/2025

- Large LIFE Nature project
 - Total budjet 8,5 M€ (5,2 M€ EU)
- Aim is to improve the conservation status of Natura 2000 sites along Baltic coastal zone
- Establishment of new conservation areas, restoration of
- Restoration of different coastal habitat types
 - Baltic islet, mosaics of herb-rich forests, seminatural grasslands sun-lit habitats and primary forest, wetlands and rivers
 - 23 sites in Finland, 7 in Estonia
 - Inc. restoration of s-e grasslands 725 ha
 - Nature trails and bird watching tower



Priodiversity LIFE 2024->

- Finland's largest EU funded LIFE biodiversity project
 - total budjet 50 M€ (30 M€ EU)
 - 8 years
- aim is to collect best practices and find new forms of funding to preserve biodiversity
- regional biodiversity programs
- restoration actions as a part of Helmi-program
- education and competence sharing
- includes different habitats, inc. s-e grasslands



Other financing

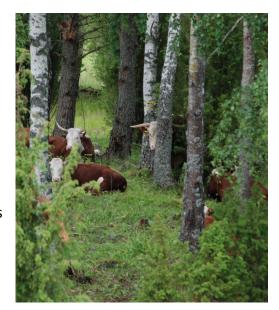
- Support to maintain important cultural heritage sites (Museum Agengy)
- Support to maintain grasslands under electric line (Fingrid)





Acute problems and challenges with s-e grasslands and pastures

- Eligibility rules became stricter
 - 10 x 10 metres accuracy
 - main attention is paid to the production capacity of feed and how much vegetation is growing in the field layer
 - Interpretation unclear of what is s-e grassland or natural pastures
 - S-e grasslands are naturally sparsely vegetated and very mosaic habitats, containing various elements supporting biodiversity -> many elements are now cut off
 - Carex-areas are not eligible for permanent grassland
- → Large areas from diverse and mosaic pastures are cut off
- → Hits hard on:
 - → coastal areas, specially island pastures and dry heaths
 - → wooded pastures and grazed woodlands in the whole country
 - → Other sparsely vegetated and mosaic areas



Acute problems and challenges with s-e grasslands and pasture

- → Farmers give up grazing
- → Managed s-e grassland area decreases
- The area applied into a-e agreements is already decreased by 9 %
- The area under agreements will decrease after field checkings and area cuttings during the first years
- → First year was confusing
 - Different language between agricultural and environmental administration
 - Finland CAP-strategic plan is not working for improving the conservation status of s-e grasslands



Future plans for the improvent, update of the CAP-strategic plan regarding grasslands

- Only small updates relating to grasslands 2024->
- Larger changes 2025 proposed for Ministry of agriculture and forestry
 - New payment category for areas with less forage and mosaic habitats
 - Assessment of payment levels / hectare
- These changes does not help the acute situation



Challenges to be solved

- How to combine and synchronize different financing mechanism
 - → Fluent and easier system and bureaucracy
- Improving co-operation between environmental and agricultural sector, as well as scientists
- How to manage s-e grasslands so, that it improves different species group in the best way
- How maintain enough grazing animals for segrasslands...



