

# AGRICULTURE-RELATED WATER AND LAND MANAGEMENT:

## Policy recommendations to decision makers from Waterdrive partners

### POLICY BRIEF



Water and land policy guide the well-being of people and ecosystems in the Baltic Sea region. Interreg BSR project Waterdrive addresses the issues from different perspectives. Waterdrive studies the opinions of farmers, local governments, project partners and policy makers on the past and current challenges in water and land management in agriculture.

The common agricultural policy is about to provide new incentives and measures to improve the water quality of freshwater bodies and the Baltic Sea in the next budgetary period of 2021-2027. The EU member states are working hard to bring change and improve the well-being of people and the Baltic Sea in the coming years. Herewith, the Waterdrive project partners highlight the challenges and provide policy recommendations for improving water and land policy in the CAP strategy and measures to bring about the change. Waterdrive-project partners urge the decision makers at all levels:

1. **Secure win-win solutions for rural communities and the environment.** Measures that support the maintaining of high-quality water, climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation must go hand-in-hand with farmers' motivation and desire to strengthen the long-term viability of their farms. Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to identify and stimulate win-win solutions and include them in their support programmes.
2. **Strengthen incentives enabling flexible local approaches and solutions.** Water management is highly dependent on local contexts and opportunities. No one size fits all across regions. Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to increase the level of flexibility and adaptivity of their present and future support programmes to benefit more from local needs, knowledge and experience.
3. **Strengthen joint and cross-sector actions on a catchment level.** Since multiple actors share watercourses and catchments, strengthened cooperation platforms and cross-sector networks are important for success. National-level support has an essential role in enabling local engagement. Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to further expand the number of pilot projects for testing catchment level water management solutions, including the new service of catchment officers.
4. **Motivate land managers to produce multiple ecosystem benefits.** Rather than supporting specific single target actions or the adoption of isolated measures, Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to identify and include measures providing multiple ecosystem benefits, including piloting result-based benefit systems.
5. **Strengthen the agricultural advisory systems.** By increasing the number of highly skilled advisors and making their services available to all farmers, large and small, including new services for smart water management at catchment level, Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to strengthen their advisory services at catchment level with sufficient funding and expertise.
6. **Strengthen strategic water governance.** Having sufficient and regular monitoring services of water quality is a key element of water governance. Waterdrive encourages BSR countries to enhance governance, research, education, monitoring and planning to ensure effective strategic water planning at different scales and to enhance sustainability, including managing risks with too little water, too much water or water of poor quality.