

Whilst planting new hedges has significant flood-related benefits, sometimes a more viable option is to focus on existing hedgerow management and enhancement. Over time and often through natural processes, existing hedges can lose functionality and require careful management practices to bring them back to full effect.

Hedges planted across the slope (with the contours) have the following flood-related benefits:

- Provide a physical barrier to field run-off
- Improve infiltration and uptake of water
- Reduce soil erosion as roots help bind the soil

Other benefits include:

- Reduced risk of nutrient leaching into nearby watercourses by increasing nutrient uptake
- Increased habitat diversity, wildlife corridors and food sources for insects, pollinators, small mammals and birds
- A strong, healthy hedgerow can act as a stock-proof barrier.

### Measure:

- This measure offers you the option to suggest improvements which could be made to your existing **cross-slope** hedges.
- This could involve:
  - Gapping up
  - Coppicing
  - Allowing hedges to grow tall (no top trimming), to lay in the following laying season
  - Management (e.g. removing brambles, soil banking).



## Requirements

- Existing hedgerows selected for enhancement must be situated across slopes. This means improvements will provide the maximum flood-related benefits.
- There must be sufficient evidence that the hedge requires restoration/improvement - e.g. signs of gapping, overgrowth in the understorey, gullied water channels through the hedge.
- Restoration of the hedgerow should be based on management rather than laying entirely new hedges.
  - Instead you may want to select **Cross-Slope Hedge Planting** or **Cross-Slope Hedge Planting on Banks** rather than this measure.
- Hedges should not be receiving funding under existing agri-environment schemes, for example under Countryside Stewardship BE3, BN7 or BN9.
- You should propose which types of works you wish to undertake on the section of hedge selected.
  - This can be assessed by a FWAG SW adviser and additional advice provided.



**Actions taken to restore your existing cross-slope hedgerows should be completed by December 2022 unless otherwise agreed. No actions should be taken until after the 31st August, observing the closed period for managing hedgerows.**

