Europe`s Living Countryside (ELC)
Case Study Germany
Final Report

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Preface

The second pillar of the CAP has been developed to contribute towards sustainable rural development and to help rural areas to adapt to changes in Pillar 1 support and to rural restructuring, particularly in the agricultural sector. The EU-15 Member States and the candidate countries developed and implemented a first generation of rural development programmes following the 1999 Rural Development Regulation and SAPARD. In 2005, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) package of measures was agreed. This provides the basis for the second generation of rural development programmes in the enlarged EU-25. EC strategic guidelines for rural development will be published and will place a stronger emphasis on the need to achieve sustainable development and on EU policy priorities, which include environmental priorities. Overall the new Regulation requires Member States to take a more strategic, focussed and participative approach to rural development as they develop their plans in 2005-6 for the new programmes to be implemented for the 2007-13 period.

This study is part of Europe's Living Countryside, a pan-European research project sponsored by WWF Europe, the Land Use Policy Group (LUPG) of GB's conservation, countryside and environment agencies and Stichting Natuur en Milieu (SNM) in the Netherlands. National studies were undertaken in seven countries (Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria – see map below). The aim was to review progress with developing and implementing rural development programmes and to explore in detail how environmental priorities and objectives might better be identified and addressed in the new rural development programmes.
Our research builds on Europe’s Rural Futures, an earlier LUPG and WWF Europe pan-European project which analysed MSs’ initial progress with developing and implementing the 2000-6 plans. Areas highlighted where improvements could be made included the need for a more strategic, coherent and integrated approaches to addressing environmental issues.

The Europe’s Living Countryside national research was carried out using an agreed common framework. This included analysing the evidence on environmental data and trends, using the results of mid-term evaluations and holding discussions and/or seminars with key stakeholders to help identify environmental priorities and to consider how the tools in the new regulation might be used to address environmental priorities and improve integration of environmental issues. Each national study includes at least one local case study to illustrate how this could be achieved.

National experts from the LUPG, WWF and SNM partnership coordinated the in-depth national research, supported in some countries (Germany, the UK and Poland) by consultants commissioned to undertake the detailed work.

For further information about the Europe’s Living Countryside project please see www.lupg.org.uk or http://www.panda.org/europe/agriculture or contact:

Rosie Simpson, Senior European Policy Adviser (Sustainable Land Management), Countryside Agency: Tel: 00 44 1242 521381
rosie.simpson@countryside.gov.uk

Elizabeth Guttenstein, Head of European Agriculture and Rural Development, WWF European Policy Office: Tel: 00 322 740 0924
Eguttenstein@wwfepo.org

Arjan Berkhuysen, EU Nature and Agricultural Policies, Stichting Natuur en Milieu: Tel: 00 31 30 234 8218
a.berkhuysen@natuurenmilieu.nl
1. Introduction

The Rural Development Regulation 1257/99 of the Common Agricultural Policy will be replaced by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in 2007. In a pan-European project WWF, the GB environmental and countryside agencies (through the Land Use Policy Group) and Stichting Natuur en Milieu in the Netherlands took the initiative to examine how the rural development policy should be developed to provide for effective programmes for nature, landscape and the environment. This project builds on two earlier phases, called Nature of Rural Development I and II (Europe’s Rural Futures) which took place between 2001 and 2003\(^1\). This third phase is called ‘Europe’s Living Countryside’ (ELCo). The nova-Institut was asked in 2004 to bring in the German experiences with rural development and carry out the German case study.

This report is based mainly on a desk study of existing documents, together with the views of relevant ‘expert’s’. The second chapter examines how the current Rural Development Plan is implemented in Germany, and concludes with a short evaluation. The main environmental issues for Germany are discussed in the third chapter, followed by an analysis of the issues that are identified to be most relevant for Rural Development Plans in Germany. The final part of this report proposes priorities for rural development planning in Germany.

The proposed priorities for Germany will be used in the ELCo project along with findings from six other national studies to make further European level recommendations for the measures and structure of the new European Rural Development Policy. These will be promoted and used to influence the European Commission, representatives of member states and other stakeholders.

2. Review of current rural development programmes

This chapter gives an overview about the structure and content of the rural development programmes (RDPs) in Germany in the period 2000 – 2006, outlines the development and implementation process of the RDPs, examines the output and outcomes of the RDPs according to the mid-term evaluation and ends with suggestions for the further development of the RDPs.

2.1. Structure and content of the programmes

2.1.1. Geographical Overview

According to the German constitution and federal political system, the responsibility for rural development lies at the level of 16 Bundesländer. The preparation and implementation of Rural Development Plans (RDPs) is a function of the individual Federal States (Länder). Figure 1 below shows that these are thirteen spatially extensive states and three city states, i.e. sixteen Federal States in all.

In addition, the RDPs in the German Objective 1 regions funded under the Structural Funds differ from those in the non-Objective 1 regions. Figure 1 also shows that the German Objective 1 regions covers the six new Länder in Eastern Germany. In these Objective 1 regions only the accompanying measures as defined in Reg. 1257/99 financed under the EAGGF Guarantee Section, are part of the RDP. The other measures under Reg. 1257/99 are part of the Objective 1 programmes.

The framework outlined above, results in three types of programmes of which the first two can be defined as RDPs in the strict sense.

1. **Ten RDPs in the old Länder**

   These comprise ten programmes of which eight RDP cover spatially large states (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein) and two RDP cover city states (Bremen and Hamburg).

2. **Six RDPs with accompanying measures as part of Objective 1 (new Länder)**

   In the six new Länder (Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia), which are identical to the German Objective 1 region as defined for the purposes of structural funding, RDPs have been drawn up containing only the four accompanying measures (early retirement, compensatory allowances, afforestation and agri-environmental measures) with financing coming from the EAGGF Guarantee Section.

3. **Six Operational Programmes for the Objective 1 region (new Länder)**

   Rural development measures which are financed from the EAGGF Guidance Section in the Objective 1 regions (Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia) are an integral part of the six respective Operational Programmes under the EU Structural Funds.

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2 See reference section for an overview of the different rural development programmes in Germany 2000 – 2006
Figure 1: German Federal States (Länder) and Objective 1 regions

2.1.2. Financial Overview

Table 1 below gives an overview of the total EU allocations for the various RDPs in Germany. Basis for this table is the planned allocation of funds according to the RDPs. An overview for Germany about the actual spending is not available.

Table 1: Distribution of the EAGGF among the German Länder (2000 – 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Länder</th>
<th>New Länder</th>
<th>Objective 1 programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RDP with accompanying measures</td>
<td>RDP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baden-Württemberg</td>
<td>763,0</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>1.634,5</td>
<td>Brandenburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>10,5</td>
<td>Mecklenburg-Vorpommern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>37,8</td>
<td>Saxony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesse</td>
<td>278,4</td>
<td>Saxony -Anhalt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony</td>
<td>544,4</td>
<td>Thuringia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Rhine Westphalia</td>
<td>302,5</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhineland-Palatinate</td>
<td>279,2</td>
<td>Total EAGGF Guarantee and Guidance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saarland</td>
<td>36,8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schleswig-Holstein</td>
<td>239,1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.126,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures above show that more than 50% of the EU budget of approximately € 8700 million for rural development in Germany 2000-2006 go to the new German Länder. This may seem surprising, given that the new Länder only cover 30% of Germany. However, closer inspection shows that most of the funds allocated to them come from the EAGGF Guidance Section and can thus, at least partly, be assigned to the field of cohesion policy and its objectives. These funds are particularly designed to improve the development and competitiveness of the farming sector in the new German Länder.

Table 2 below shows that there are also clear differences between the Federal States in terms of the distribution of funds. These become particularly obvious if the available funding is related to the agricultural area in the individual states. There is a striking North-South gradient in both the new and the old Länder. In Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, as well as in Saxony and Thuringia in the South, the amount of available EU funding per hectare of agricultural area is clearly higher than in the northern Länder (Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg).
Table 2: Distribution of the EAGGF in relation to the agricultural area (2000 – 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Länder</th>
<th>New Länder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal State</td>
<td>EAGGF funding in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ / ha ag. area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baden-Württemberg</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saarland</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhineland-Palatinate</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesse</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schleswig-Holstein</td>
<td>234 Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Rhine Westphalia</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason for this very disparate distribution of funds originates part in the previous funding period. An essential component of the method of allocation the 2000 – 2006 funds was the previous distribution in 1994-1999. This is true for Objective 5a and Objective 5b regions as well as for the agri-environmental programmes, where the proportions of funding allocated to each mirror the allocations in the previous round. While this approach is plausible it leads to a situation where those Federal States which had only modestly funded agri-environmental programmes in the previous round, have had little room for expansion 2000-2006. This brings with it the risk of a consolidation of potential existing deficits.

2.1.3. Objectives of the programmes

According to the European Commission evaluation glossary “Objectives should be clear, explicit and initial statements on the effects to be achieved by a public intervention.” Programmes like the RDPs consist of a system of objectives. Objectives on the level of the program, the strategy, the measures and the projects can be differentiated in vertical direction. Horizontal differentiation distinguishes between input (e.g. finances), process, output and outcome.
The following common points of criticism can be highlighted in relation to the objectives defined in the different German RDPs 2000 – 2006:

- Objectives are not described at all or are difficult to identify (sometimes there are no chapters in the RDPs on “Objectives” ) or the objectives are presented differently.

- Programme objectives are not measurable and are unconnected to each other. Specific, verifiable objectives are only defined below the funding priorities at the level of measures.

- For measures that are not primarily targeted towards the environment, no environmental objectives are defined. This makes it rather difficult to integrate the environmental dimension into the overall programme.

- Objectives are input (e.g. finances) and output (e.g. km of roads, km of hedges) oriented. The desired outcomes are seldom quantified.

- Sustainability or sustainable rural development is often mentioned as an overall (programme) objective, without any definition.

- Process-related objectives (e.g. participation of environmental actors, integration of the environmental dimension with the project selection) are hardly defined.
2.1.4. Measures and allocation of Funds

The following table gives an overview of the allocation of EU-funds for the various eligible measures as defined in Reg. 1257/99 in Germany. The table shows, that the largest portion of the funds is spent on agri-environmental measures (31%), followed by village renewal (29%), investment in agricultural holdings (10%) and compensatory allowances (8%). All the other measures account for a share of 5 percent or less.

Table 3: Overview about the allocation of funds in Germany 2000 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure Description</th>
<th>EU funding in Germany Mio. €</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art. 4-7: Investment in agricultural holdings</td>
<td>887,2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 8: Setting up of young farmers</td>
<td>40,12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 9: Training</td>
<td>25,39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 10-12: Early retirement</td>
<td>17,63</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 13a: Compensatory allowances</td>
<td>671,18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 16: Compensation f. restrictions in SAC</td>
<td>43,15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 22-24: Agri-environmental measures</td>
<td>2667,54</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 25-28: Processing/Marketing</td>
<td>472,35</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 29-32: Forestry</td>
<td>264,74</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 31: Afforestation</td>
<td>134,022</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(1): Land improvement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(2): Reparcelling</td>
<td>435,71</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(3): Farm management</td>
<td>1,82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(4): Marketing quality agric. products</td>
<td>25,69</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(5): Basic services</td>
<td>46,2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(6): Village renewal</td>
<td>1757,77</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(7): Diversification</td>
<td>57,04</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(8): Water resources</td>
<td>404,14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(9): Infrastructure</td>
<td>268,94</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(10): Tourism / crafts</td>
<td>64,55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(11): Environmental protection</td>
<td>247,43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(12): Natural disasters/prevention</td>
<td>85,21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 33(13): Financial engineering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation / Additional measures</td>
<td>73,096</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>8690,92</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get a clearer picture about the central focus and the effects of the RDPs in Germany the measures have been grouped. A distinction has been made between measures that are primarily focused on developing agriculture and forestry, measures targeted towards non-agricultural areas and the diversification of agriculture (rural development) and measures relating to environmental and compensatory measures (including afforestation).
Table 4: Grouping of measures according to their primary focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of agriculture and forestry</th>
<th>Rural development</th>
<th>Environmental and compensatory measures / afforestation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Investment in agricultural holdings (Art. 4-7)</td>
<td>• Basic services (Art. 33, Par. 5)</td>
<td>• Early retirement (Art. 10 – 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setting up of young farmers (Art. 8)</td>
<td>• Renovation/development of villages (Art. 33, Par. 6)</td>
<td>• Support for less-favoured areas (Chapter V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training (Art. 9)</td>
<td>• Diversification (Art. 33, Par. 7)</td>
<td>• Compensation for environmental restrictions (e.g. under Habitats Directive) (Art. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Processing and marketing of agricultural products (Art. 25 – 28)</td>
<td>• Tourism / crafts (Art. 33, Par. 10)</td>
<td>• Agri-environmental measures (Art. 22-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forestry (Art. 29, 30, 32)</td>
<td>• Restoration following natural disasters, and prevention instruments (Art. 33, Par. 12)</td>
<td>• Afforestation (Art. 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reparcelling (Art. 33, Par. 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmental protection (Art. 33, Par. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farm management (Art. 33, Par. 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing of quality agricultural products (Art. 33, Par. 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Water resources (Art. 33, Par. 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infrastructure (Art. 33, Par. 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 below shows that overall (D = Germany) the largest portion of the EU-funds (42%) is allocated to environmental and compensatory measures. A third (33%) of the funding is invested in the development of agriculture and forestry, and the smallest share (23%) flows into rural development outside of farming and forestry.

Figure 3: Prioritisation in the RDPs (% of funding allocated to priorities)
Figure 3 also shows that there are considerable regional variations from the German average.

Generally in the new Länder more funding is allocated to the development of agriculture and forestry and for rural development (c. 10% each), than in the old Länder. At the same
time the new Länder allocate a smaller share (c. 20%) for environmental and compensatory measures.

In the two northern Federal States of Lower Saxony (NI) and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV) more than 50% of funding flows into the development of agriculture and forestry while only c. 20% is allocated to environmental and compensatory measures. In the two southern Federal States of Bavaria (BY) and Baden-Württemberg (BW) this situation is reversed. There, approximately 75% of the funds are allocated to environmental and compensatory measures with only 20% and 15% being spend on the development of agriculture and forestry respectively in the context of the RDP.

Figure 3 indicates as well that the minimum rates for the different axis fixed in the new EARDF regulation should not become a restriction for most of the future German RDPs 2007 - 2013. Just Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are getting close to a maximum limit of 80 % for Axis 2 (Land management) which includes the environmental and compensatory measures.

2.2. Development and implementation of the rural development programmes

2.2.1. Programme development

The programme planning was a new process for all the actors involved, and took place under relatively tight timescale. Different rural development measures which had previously been separate were combined under a single (strategic) roof for the first time. However financial planning took place at the level of the measures. First it was decided how much each ministry or department would get. The strategy for the overall program was developed as a second step. The relationship between different measures, whether they complement or contradict each other, or how synergies can be utilised, was hardly considered.

In addition, both administration authorities and politicians showed little interest in strategic formulations of objectives in programming which can be monitored, since they would be more easily open to criticism.

In summary, the bundling of (existing) measures had some initial coordinating effects and in this respect is an improvement on past practice. However, the RDPs are not the result of a strategic and objective-oriented planning process.

2.2.2. Participation / Partnership

From both theory and practice it is known that a partnership approach, involving various interest groups in the planning and implementation of support programmes, is one of the central keys in generating successful sustainable integrated rural development.

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3. 10% for the improvement of competitiveness and forestry (Axis 1), 25 % for Axis 2 (land management) and 10 % for diversification measures (Axis 3)
The economic and social partners and the environmental authorities participated to varying degrees in the drawing up of the RDP at the Federal State level. The type of participation varied from rather formal (information / statement) to intensive, and in some instances involved multi-level, exchange and feedback processes. During the implementation phase the performance of the partnerships was poorer.

Administrative questions like cash flow are the central theme of discussions in the Monitoring Committees. Strategic questions are hardly considered. Thus increasingly the interest and the participation of the economic and social partners shrinks and the meetings become administrative exercises.

As a result, the majority of the involved actors are dissatisfied with the process and with the results of participation in the Monitoring Committees. The evaluators of the mid-term evaluation partly suggested that the Monitoring Committees should be abolished if they were not given defined, meaningful tasks.

A particularly critical issue is that participation in a vertical direction ends at the Länder level. There is no participation at the local level except through LEADER+ the community initiative. This means that it is not possible to adapt programmes to strongly divergent local conditions or to mobilise local actors through participation.

### 2.2.3. Administration and Controls

The complex administrative processes of the RDPs is one of the main areas of criticism for the German administration. Criticisms include:

- the separation into two programmes within Objective-1 areas,
- the control system that was developed for the market policy but which is not suitable for rural development,
- procedures for changing the programs are too complex and lengthy.

According to the mid-term evaluation, the complex administration processes lead to a concentration on measures which are easy to deliver and which make cash flow easier. The massive investment in rural roadways in Lower Saxony is a good example of this “mechanism”. The originally foreseen 66 Mio. € for rural roadways in the RDP of the year 2000 were in 2003 increased by 34 Mio. € (relative increase of 51 %) to a total of 100 Mio. €. Funding of rural roadways is now the biggest single measure in the Lower Saxony rural development programme. Complex, demanding and area-based measures (for example within the agri-environmental areas) remain underused. The funds therefore tend to focus on comparatively large, high spending single projects and projects, which can be accomplished and accounted for within one financial year.

In summary, these criticisms seem to be justified to a considerable degree but the problems are partly due to the German implementation processes used. From an environmental and nature protection point of view, simplification should not be used to justify the removal of existing effective, demanding, target-driven and area-based agri-environmental measures.
2.2.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The assessment of the quality of the monitoring and evaluation systems yielded clearly negative results. Evaluation is little used as an instrument for improving the programmes. Although there are clear methodological problems, this is mainly because evaluations are not generally accepted to be a useful mechanism to steer the rural development programmes or to learn from implementation experience. They are mainly carried out as a compulsory exercise in Germany. The following quotation clarifies this: "All actors who took part showed relatively little interest in the process of the evaluation or in the results. The most important thing was to comply with the rules" (Heintel, 2002). This attitude affects people’s willingness to cooperate with the evaluators and reduces openness for using the results to learn.

The ex-ante evaluations did not fulfill their function to accompany the programme development process and to improve the programs (i.e. to support the definition of objectives). However, the quality of the mid-term evaluations was much better, although their quality varied considerably. For example, some measures were attributed by different evaluators to have different effects. A further criticism is the lack of transparency of the results of the evaluations and a lack of clarity in the reports.

The quality of the evaluation of environmental effects was particularly poor. Potential negative impacts on the environment were not even considered in many evaluation systems. The argumentation given for this was that: if the existing law is respected, negative environmental effects will be automatically avoided. An argument that is neither very convincing or sustainable, as the problem of increasing new use of land for development (e.g. for housing, industrial sites) shows.

2.3. Outputs and outcomes

Despite the extensive mid-term-evaluations\(^4\) so far no quantified, comparable information is available on the outputs and outcomes of the rural development programmes for Germany as a whole. This is for several reasons:

- There is no overall summary of the effects of the various RDPs in Germany;
- The methodological approaches and the results of the mid-term evaluations vary greatly between the evaluations and are thus not directly comparable;
- The identification of the outcomes of the programmes is difficult;
- The RDPs are in a relatively early phase of implementation. For example, the effects generated by investments have not yet become evident.
- The lack of programme objectives mentioned above and required monitoring systems make an evaluation of the effects quite difficult.

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\(^4\) See references for an overview of the mid-term evaluations of the rural development programmes in Germany 2000 – 2006
A brief analysis of mid-term evaluations in selected Länder highlights the following qualitative assessments and conclusions in relation to economic and ecological effects. However it must be stated, that the qualitative estimates also differ significantly.

2.3.1. Economic Effects

In evaluating the “economic area” the mid-term-evaluations concentrated on “employment” and “income” effects. The following quotations from two mid-term evaluations demonstrate how differently the employment effects were judged:

"Effects on the improvement of employment are only identifiable or likely in relation to a small amount of the funds used." (Mid-term evaluation Lower Saxony, chapter 1 summary, page 11)

“It was shown that taken together all the measures undertaken within the framework of the RDP can be seen as an important economic programme for the rural areas of Baden-Württemberg. A total of 7.000 employment opportunities were preserved or created …” (Mid-term evaluation Baden-Wuerttemberg, summary page 4)

The cause of these divergent results appears to be due less to the divergent programmes in the Länder, and more to the divergent approach and assessments of the evaluators.

The following explanation seems likely in relation to the employment effects – that the main aspect for the RDPs might be temporary employment effects. These arise for example from construction activities connected with investments, but have only a limited effect. The long term employment effects are relatively small. New jobs in rural areas are mainly generated outside the agricultural sector and the concentration of the RDPs on the agricultural sector does not allow for spending in non-agricultural areas. The RDPs therefore contribute to the modernisation, rationalisation, re-orientation and specialisation of agricultural holdings and improve their competitiveness. This maintains jobs in the agricultural sector or slows down job losses, but it would appear to be unrealistic to expect many new jobs to be generated.

In relation to income effects, the picture from the mid-term evaluations is more uniform. The evaluators conclude that there are relatively high positive effects on income in the agricultural sector. This estimate appears plausible considering the strong concentration of the funds on this sector.
2.3.2. Ecological Effects

The following overview shows how differently the mid-term evaluations assessed the effect of the rural development programs on the environment.

Table 5: Overview of mid-term evaluation environmental assessments of the RDPs in a selection of Länder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>BW</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>SL</th>
<th>RP</th>
<th>BY</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>SH</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of the Funds with the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main objective environment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>&gt; 80</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>&gt; 80</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>ca. 60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ca. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in %)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the Funds with</td>
<td>400 Mio.</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>&lt; 1 %</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>116 Mio.</td>
<td>€</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative environmental</td>
<td>€</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects (in € or %)</td>
<td></td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>not relevant</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(BY Bavaria, BW Baden-Württemberg, RP Rhineland-Palatinate, SL Saarland, NW North Rhine-Westphalia, BB Berlin-Brandenburg, TH Thuringia, SH Schleswig-Holstein, NI Lower Saxony)

The reasons for these differences are again rooted in the approaches taken to the evaluations and assessments as well as to the programmes themselves. Thus for example in Baden-Württemberg, the support for investment or reparcelling is considered amongst the "environmental measures" whereas in most other evaluations this is not the case.

This phenomenon - that comparable measures are differently judged – is even clearer when the evaluation of negative environmental effects of the RDP is considered. For example in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, the negative effects of rural road construction on land consumption are described, but they are not mentioned in other mid-term evaluations. The argument for excluding negative impacts are well known from the ex-ante-evaluations: "the objectives of the program formally exclude negative environmental impacts" or "impacts can be avoided by compliance with legal requirements". These lines of arguments are not realistic – as for example the problem of new use of rural land for development shows and they are not necessarily in line with the quality standards of evaluations.

Agri-environmental measures

The agri-environmental measures are to a large extent positively evaluated in the mid-term evaluations, although the focus is mainly on the output and not the outcome. The following points are particularly highlighted, and/or regarded critically:

- Extensification measures are reaching particularly areas of lower farming intensity and they can prevent increasing intensification of agricultural land there. However, extensification measures are not really able to prevent the abandonment of extensively used agricultural land.

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5 Ergebnisse der Evaluierung der Agrarumweltprogramme in Niedersachsen. Vortrag von Karin Reiter am 25.03.2004
In relation to agri-environmental measures with relatively low requirements (horizontal measures) the danger of major "windfall effects" (i.e. payment for doing very little) exists. In this case, income effects could play a bigger role than environmental improvement.

Area-based measures such as nature protection or water protection contracts (Vertragsnaturschutz) are highly targeted and make a relatively high contribution to resource protection.

Agri-environmental measures play a minor role in intensive farming regions. Areas with high intensity and thereby high input risk tend not to be reached by horizontal agri-environmental measures or are only affected to a limited degree.

The following example clarifies the latter point. In Lower Saxony the area that has the highest nitrogen overload (256 kg/ha*y) the uptake of agri-environmental measures was very low. In these intensively used agricultural areas new ways would appear to be necessary to achieve environmental objectives (i.e. area-based approaches, differentiated assistance rates, advice, bidding procedures).

Compensation for less favoured areas

Compensation payments for Less Favoured Areas (LFA) are supporting farmers who cultivate land under difficult natural conditions. The instrument is used in Germany since 30 years. Due to its substantial financial volume (around 10 % of the RDPs) and its spatial extension (around 50 % of the agricultural area in Germany) the questions are: what are the effects of LFA-compensation payments and have they reached their objectives?

The results of the ex post evaluation 1994 – 1998 and the mid-term evaluation 2000 – 2002\(^6\) show a differentiated picture for the LFA-payments in relation to the main objectives improvement of the income situation of farmers, maintaining the cultural landscape and maintaining a minimum population density for different regions and farms without giving an overall conclusion.

On the other side, the same evaluators come to the conclusion, that the CAP reform will necessarily lead to a change of the current practice of LFA-payments\(^7\). Cause main objectives of the LFA-payments like the compensation of income loss and maintaining the agricultural utilisation are loosing weight. In their view it will lead to a more targeted approach of LFA-payments.

The discussion about the future of the LFA-payments in Germany is very controversial. Environmental NGOs in Germany are arguing for a stronger focus on environmentally sensitive areas, whereas the biggest German farmer

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\(^7\) - Ist die Ausgleichszulage für benachteiligte Gebiete modernisierungsbedürftig? Vortrag von Dr. Reiner Plankl am 2./3. Juni 2004 in der Andreas Hermes Akademie in Bonn-Röttgen

- Auswirkungen der Luxemburger Beschlüsse auf ländliche Räume, Agrarumweltmaßnahmen und die Ausgleichszulage, FAL und FAA. Arbeitsbericht September 2003
organisation (DBV) is against any change and financial reduction in the period 2007 - 2013.

2.4. Approaches to further development

There is potential for further development of the RDPs in planning and implementation processes, in relation to eligible measures and in setting financial priorities.

- **Processes:**
  More rigorous consideration and implementation is needed of the basic principles of sustainable rural development, *i.e.* participation, evaluation, the spatial approach, regionalisation and integration (including the environmental dimension). In particular the central German support instrument for rural development the “Common Task for the improvement of agricultural structures and coastal protection” (*Gemeinschaftsaufgabe zur Verbesserung der Agrarstruktur und des Küstenschutzes, GAK*) should be further developed. Additionally, at the European level closer monitoring of compliance with these principles in planning and implementing the RDPs is needed.

- **Support measures and prioritisations**
  It is necessary to give more consideration to non-agricultural aspects (e.g. small businesses, trades and crafts, services and tourism), to environmental and conservation aspects, and to facilitation processes (e.g. cooperation, communication, management). The spectrum of eligible measures under the GAK should be extended, particularly in terms of environmental measures (agri-environmental measures, compensation for environmental restrictions in SAC, and conservation management contracts). With regard to Reg. 1257/99 especially the restriction of support eligibility to the farming and farming-related sector should be broadened to other relevant sectors. There is a need to simplify the Guarantee rules to make it easier to develop more complex projects and to avoid RDR funding being allocated to simple, high spending measures or projects. Only by focusing on employment options outside the agricultural sector will rural policy be able to provide new employment prospects for people leaving farming.

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8 Beschluss des Präsidiums des deutschen Bauernverbandes vom 24. Mai 2005 zur Entschließung zur Ausgleichszulage für benachteiligte Gebiete
3. **Environmental issues and objectives**

This chapter gives an overview about the state of the rural environment in Germany, identifies priority environmental issues for rural development and defines environmental objectives and targets for the next generation of RDPs in Germany.

3.1. **Overview of the state of the rural environment**

3.1.1. **Biodiversity**

Most of the 500 or so different kinds of habitats in Germany are considered to be endangered (69%). Of all known German animal species (16,000), about 36% are threatened and 3% are already extinct. Looking at the flora, about 27% of the 3300 species are endangered and almost 2% extinct. About 90% of the threatened flora and fauna mainly occur in areas characterised by an extensive land use. The main threats are:

- Damage to, and fragmentation of sites through land development (e.g. for roads, industrial sites, housing).
- Intensive agricultural land use together with eutrophication and homogenisation of the landscape.
- Changes in the water balance and the structure of open waters.
- Abandonment of extensively used agricultural land.

A reduction of house and business development on "green field sites" would improve the situation. Enhanced financial support for the use of already cleared areas, vacant lots and existing buildings would also help.

Special measures are urgently needed to extend locally adapted land use management and high nature value farming. In addition, the maintenance of natural and semi-natural open water, a halt to drainage measures, and the restoration or improvement of small ponds and lakes, are substantial measures for creating biological diversity based on the use of locally adapted materials.

3.1.2. **Soil, water and air**

The main problems concerning soils are the sealing of soils (e.g. with tarmac or concrete) due to building, and nutrient eutrophication in intensively used agricultural areas with high stocking rates. In most cases soil eutrophication is combined with leaching of nitrogen (N) into surface and ground water. In 2000 the German N surplus was 117 kg/ha. According to the German sustainability strategy this must be reduced to 80 kg/ha by 2010. In relation to eutrophication of soil and water, gaseous emissions of N are important. Agriculture is the main source of gaseous emission of N and accounts for 48% of ammonia emissions. The available data for compaction of soils and erosion is inadequate.

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9 Daten zur Natur 2004. Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN) 2004
To reduce the input of N measures and implement the German Codes of good agricultural practice, there is a need to improve education, agricultural extension and information. A general levy on mineral N fertiliser, reduced stocking rates on managed areas of farms and an increase of organic and extensive farming have also been discussed as ways to limit N inputs. Management prescriptions and the designation of protected areas could also improve soil and water conditions in certain areas.

3.1.3 Aquatic environment

By the 1970s most smaller streams had lost their natural or semi-natural condition due to water engineering works or to direct drainage schemes. The northern, flat region of Germany is more affected by such development than mountain and hill areas. Fauna and flora have been lost as a result of this, and due to land cultivation directly along the banks. Today both the protection of existing semi-natural waters, and the restoration of the natural situation, are important political challenges.

3.1.4 Climate change

In 2001 about 87% of Germany’s greenhouse emissions were caused by carbon dioxide (CO2), 7.2% by methane and 4.9% by N2O. Agriculture contributes to the emission 5.8% of the six Kyoto gases (without emissions associated with energy). Concerning N2O, about 52.5% of the emissions come from agriculture, for methane this proportion is 45%. Measures to improve livestock management and nutrient balance will be necessary to reduce these emissions. According to the German Sustainability Strategy greenhouse gas emissions shall be reduced by 21% by 2010 in comparison with 1990.

3.1.5 Summary of the environmental situation

The following table summarises the environmental situation in Germany and provides an overview of environmental stakeholders’ perceptions, existing strategies and objectives for improvement, the significance for EU environmental policy and their relevance for agriculture and rural development.

The main environmental issues in relation to biodiversity, water, soil, climate change, landscape and air are:

- The progressive extinction of species, among other things through the loss and damage to habitats. Despite small successes this is a very urgent problem. A further deterioration of the situation is only likely to be avoided by effective implementation of N2000 linked to an enlargement of conservation areas;
- Nutrient and pollutant emissions to ground and surface waters remain key issues, despite all efforts and despite successes with point source pollution. The implementation of WFD could improve the situation;
• Land use for development is identified as a central problem. Damage to soil by erosion, compaction and pollution has been reduced e.g. by the Federal Soil Conservation Act but is still an environmental issue;
• Climate change is one of the central environmental topics in Germany, however, agriculture is responsible only for a small portion of greenhouse gas emissions;
• Loss of grassland and open cultural landscapes is an important issue especially in connection with biotope protection;
• Air pollution is no longer the central focus of the environmental actors because of significant improvements.
Table 6: Environmental themes in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Main Problems perceived by NGOs/stakeholders under each theme</th>
<th>National/regional priorities or strategies and objectives¹¹¹²¹³</th>
<th>Significance for EU environmental Policy</th>
<th>Importance according to “objective expert opinion” and in relation to agriculture / rural development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Loss and damage to habitats Decrease of species</td>
<td>According to the amendment of the Federal Nature Conservation Act (2002) a biotope network should cover at least 10% of the area of Germany Definition of regional minimum densities by countries. Data situation is unclear. New German Sustainability Strategy¹² indicator: Nachhaltigkeitsindikator für Artenvielfalt¹³</td>
<td>High (habitats directive 92/43/EWG)</td>
<td>Progressive loss of biodiversity is seen by NGOs/stakeholders to be an urgent problem but with little progress so far. High relevance for agriculture/rural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Nutrient and pollutant immissions in ground- and surface waters Flood protection</td>
<td>Good chemical and ecological condition of all waters by 2015 (but not yet defined) Drinking water limit value 50 mg Nitrate (drinking water regulation) Reaching the target values for Chemical Water Quality Class II for AOX (Adsorbed organic halogen compounds) and Total-N (total nitrogen) for all water courses, i.e. at 100 % of the measuring sites, by 2010 (DUX: German Environment Index)</td>
<td>High (Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EG; Drinking Water Regulation 80/778/EWG; Nitrate Directive)</td>
<td>The development of water quality in Germany is very differentiated. After successes in dealing with point source of pollution, diffuse sources now need to be addressed, e.g. from agriculture. Agriculture/rural development is highly relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>Land used for development, soil erosion, soil compaction, pollution (soil acidification, soil eutrophication)</td>
<td>Sustainability Strategy: reduction of land use for housing and roads to 30 ha/day. German Environment Index (DUX): restriction of land use for settlements and traffic areas to 30 ha/day by 2020 Federal Soil Conservation Act: no specific limits or target values for soil erosion or damage to soil structure.</td>
<td>Small to medium</td>
<td>Environmental actors consider land use for new development to be the main problem. Agriculture is negatively affected by this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>Reduction of the emissions of gases relevant to climate change by 21% by 2010 compared with 1990 levels. Doubling of the ratio of renewable energies in primary energy consumption to 5%, and to 10% in electric power generation by 2010. Increase of the ratio of renewable energies in primary energy consumption to 25% by 2030 and to 50% by 2050 (DUX and National Climate Protection Program)</td>
<td>High (Kyoto-Protocol UN 1992) High (Kyoto-Protocol UN 1992)</td>
<td>Climate change is one of the central environmental issues in Germany, but agriculture causes only a small proportion (approx. 7 %) of green-house gases. Biomass energy could make positive contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>Loss of grassland Suburbanisation</td>
<td>Agriculture maintained over the whole area to keep the cultural landscape open. General objectives are set out in the Federal Nature Conservation Act</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Topic is discussed from the nature protection particularly in connection with biotope protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Air pollutants</td>
<td>Sustainability Strategy: by 2010 reduce the emissions of air pollutants that are particularly harmful to health and the environment (sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxides, ammonia, NMVOC = non-methane volatile organic compounds) by 70 % compared with 1990 levels. NEC guideline 2001/81/EC: Reduce ammonia emissions from at current levels of approx. 600 kilotons to maximum of 550 kilotons by 2010.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>There is scope for significant improvements but the topic is not a central focus for environmental actors. More than 90 % of ammonia emissions originate from agriculture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹¹ Cross-cutting objective of the German sustainability strategy: Increase the proportion of organic farming from 3,2 % in 2000 to 20 % by 2010
¹³ Nachhaltigkeitsindikator für die Artenvielfalt – Informationen zu den Ergebnissen des F&E Vorhabens. Dr. Roland Achtziger, Dr. Hermann Stickroth, Roland Zieschank. 2004
3.2. Priority environmental issues

Biodiversity is the most relevant of the six environmental themes mentioned above (Biodiversity, Water, Soil, Climate Change, Landscape, Air) in relation to rural development. This is because biodiversity is the theme most strongly linked to agriculture and rural development. It is also recognised as the environmental issue where Germany probably faces the greatest problems to reverse the existing (negative) trends.

The following table highlights existing specific biodiversity values in Germany and associated problems. It links these specific values and problems to EU policy and to the causes of problems (pressures). It is very clear from this table that biodiversity in Germany is connected to a large extent with extensive dry and wet grasslands, forests and alluvial plains. The table also shows that intensification of land use (land cultivation, forestry, recreation, land development and fragmentation) and the abandonment of traditional, less intensive cultivation practices are causing the decline of specific biotopes.

From an international biodiversity perspective Germany bears responsibility especially for biotopes like oligotrophic sites, grasslands rich in flowers, alluvial plains, meadow birds, beech forests and red kites.
### Table 7: Biodiversity values (of EU importance) that are in decline, and corresponding pressures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific values and problems</th>
<th>EU Policy reference</th>
<th>Pressures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grasslands rich in flowers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large loss of grasslands (2003: -2.9%) that were still widespread 20 years ago</td>
<td>Annex 1 habitats</td>
<td>Intensification of cultivation (use of fertiliser, conversion to intensive grassland, overgrazing, use of pesticides), abandonment, afforestation; land used for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oligotrophic sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant losses</td>
<td>Annex 1 habitats</td>
<td>Air-borne emission of pollutants and nutrients, nitrogen excess in agriculture, intensification of land cultivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beech forests</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main area of distribution worldwide</td>
<td>Annex 1 habitats with main area of distribution in Germany</td>
<td>Intensive forestry (short rotation periods, selection of non-native tree species, age-group forests without natural regeneration), lack of natural processes/dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fens, wet grasslands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large losses</td>
<td>Annex 1 habitats, Annex 1 bird communities</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation (drainage, use of fertiliser, conversion to intensive grassland, conversion to farmland, use of pesticides), abandonment, lowered ground water level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alluvial plains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large losses</td>
<td>Annex 1 habitats, Annex 1 bird communities</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation (drainage, use of fertiliser, overgrazing, conversion to intensive grassland, conversion to farmland, use of pesticides), afforestation with non-native tree species, missing natural processes/dynamics, fragmentation, land consumption, excavation, river works and regulation, intensive recreation use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small structured open landscapes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large losses of structural elements (hedges, tree rows, fringes)</td>
<td>Annex 1 birds</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation (land clearance, use of pesticides, expansion of field cultivation), fragmentation, land used for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sparse orchards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large losses; several bird species from the red list are declining in population</td>
<td>Annex 1 bird communities</td>
<td>Land developed for housing, industry and roads; isolation through fragmentation; conversion to intensive fruit growing; clearing and conversion to grassland or farmland, land abandonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildcat (Felis silvestris)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight regeneration after a heavy decline in population (approximately 1.500 wildcats in Germany’s low mountain areas (Eifel, Pfälzer Wald, Harz, Hunsrück))</td>
<td>Annex 2 mammal</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation, fragmentation through development of land, intensive recreation use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meadow birds (whinchat, black-tailed godwit)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy decline in population (i.e. 6.650 breeding pairs of black tailed godwit in Germany)</td>
<td>Annex 1 birds</td>
<td>Abandonment of traditional extensive forms of cultivation and conversion to intensive grassland, abandonment of agricultural use, afforestation, drainage, conversion to farmland, intensive recreation use, isolation of habitats through fragmentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corn bunting (Emberiza calandra)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline in population of more than 20% in the last 20 years</td>
<td>Annex 1 birds</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation (removal of structural elements, drainage, ploughing up immediately after harvest), afforestation of grasslands; fragmentation through development of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red kite (Milvus milvus)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50% of the worldwide population in Germany (12.250 breeding pairs, loss of 25 % in the last decade)</td>
<td>Annex 1 bird with main population in Germany</td>
<td>Intensive forestry; fragmentation by roads; intensification of land cultivation (removal of structural elements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle spotted woodpecker (Dendrocopos medius)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main area of distribution, more than 10% of the European population is native to Germany (7.000 – 12.000 breeding pairs)</td>
<td>Annex 1 bird</td>
<td>Intensive forestry (short rotation periods, small percentage of broadleaves, esp. oaks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Great bittern (Botaurus stellaris)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with extinction (population left: 360 – 620), continuing decline in Germany (50 % between 1975 - 1999); negative population development and unfavourable state of maintenance in Europe</td>
<td>Annex 1 bird</td>
<td>Intensive recreation use, building development, drainage, lowering ground water, intensive fishing, water pollution, water eutrophication, river works, isolation of habitats through fragmentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Daten zur Natur 2004. Bundessamt für Naturschutz (BfN) 2004 sowie
- Vögel der Agrarlandschaft – Bestand, Gefährdung, Schutz. Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU) 2004

 novainstitut October 2005
The following table 8 combines the identified problems and pressures in the biodiversity area to an environmental issue and tries to describe the connection of these issues with landuse activities and to figure out the relevance for rural development.

### Table 8: Issues, drivers, policy response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems + pressures = issues</th>
<th>Landuses/ activities</th>
<th>Preferred policy response – RD relevant or not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of biodiversity (decrease of plant types of oligotrophic sites, increase of nitrophile plant types, at the same time displacement of other euryecious species) by nitrogen load of soils, waters and forests by the agriculture</td>
<td>Intensive livestock farming in highest quality agricultural areas</td>
<td>High Decoupling the bonus payment from the production Enhanced promotion of ecologically harmless management methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise of the background concentration (e.g. by ozone) can damage flora</td>
<td>Pollutant from industry and trade</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of the diversity of species by change of the utilization of marginal sites (intensification of the cultivation and/or abandonment of the utilisation/afforestation)</td>
<td>Intensification and/or abandonment of land use on marginal sites</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of meadow birds due to the changed use of grassland</td>
<td>Abandonment of land use especially on wet grassland, conversion to intensive grassland or farmland, afforestation. Concentration on highest quality agricultural areas.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentation of habitats leading to a loss of biodiversity (e.g. wildcat, red kite)</td>
<td>Land development for roads and housing in rural areas, industry and businesses outside settlements</td>
<td>Small - A target of the Federal Government: to reduce new development of land to 30 hectares per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive forest management decreases animal species inhabiting mature stands (e.g. middle spotted woodpecker, red kite)</td>
<td>Short rotation periods</td>
<td>High (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing natural dynamics, absence of succession due to intensive land use leading to a decrease of biodiversity (e.g. middle spotted woodpecker; wildcat, saproxylic insects. etc.)</td>
<td>Removal of deadwood</td>
<td>High (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depletion of the genetic diversity</td>
<td>Intensification of agricultural use, e.g. fruit-growing, animal husbandry</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of structural elements and associated flora to agricultural crops resulting in a decrease of corn bunting and red kite populations</td>
<td>Intensification of land cultivation by concentration on highest quality agricultural areas</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution and eutrophication of waters and wetlands leading to loss of biodiversity</td>
<td>Intensive agriculture in waters proximity</td>
<td>Small – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of disturbance-sensitive animal species (e.g. great bittern, wildcat)</td>
<td>Intensive recreation use</td>
<td>Small - Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of richly structured, regionally typical cultural landscape with high recreation value</td>
<td>Suburbanization (land development) and intensification of the agriculture</td>
<td>Small – High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to this table the important environmental issues with high relevance for rural development are

- loss of biodiversity resulting from excess nitrogen in soils, water and forests due to the agriculture,
- decrease of the diversity of species due to the land use changes on marginal sites and grassland,
- decrease of species inhabiting mature stands due to intensive forest management,
- decrease of species inhabiting richly structured landscapes (e.g. corn bunting and red kite) due to loss of structural elements, by suburbanization and intensification of agriculture, and decrease of recreation value,
- loss of biodiversity due to pollution and eutrophication of water and wetlands,
- loss of richly structured, regionally typical cultural landscape with high recreation value.

The environmental issues with high relevance for rural development as identified in table 8 are combined to the following three central environmental issues in relation to rural development 2007 – 2013:

- Change of agricultural practices lead to a decrease of biodiversity
- Change of land use lead to a decrease of alluvial plains and wetlands
- Intensive forest management reduces biodiversity in forests

Table 9 gives a first analysis about the selected issues and potential RD responses.

**Table 9: selected issues and potential RD responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Potential new factors for 2007-13</th>
<th>Potential RD policy responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing agricultural practices</td>
<td>National implementation of CAP-reform</td>
<td>Introduce new agri-environment schemes and approaches (regionalized, area-based, differentiated assistance rates, advice, bidding procedures) Use new bn2000 measure Combine LEADER approach and land management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leading to decrease of biodiversity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce new agri-environment schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing land use leading to decrease of alluvial plains and wetlands</td>
<td>New management plans for SACs and SPAs may introduce restrictions on some practices. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive</td>
<td>New approach to forestry measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive forest management</td>
<td>Reference to forest-environment measures may help NGOs to push for measures that promote conservation management</td>
<td>Reduce expenditure on forest roads Introduce new measures for conservation forestry, including incentives for forest owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reducing biodiversity in forests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3. Environmental objectives and targets

For the three identified environmental issues the following objectives and targets are defined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Agricultural Landscape</th>
<th>Alluvial plains and wetlands</th>
<th>Forests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Issue</td>
<td>Changing agricultural practices leading to decrease of biodiversity</td>
<td>Changing land use leading to decrease of alluvial plains and wetlands</td>
<td>Intensive forest management reducing biodiversity in forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Conserve and support the diversity of species and habitats in the agricultural landscape by sustainable landuse management</td>
<td>Preserve and promote the diversity of species and habitats in alluvial plains and humid areas by sustainable land use</td>
<td>Protect and promote the diversity of species and habitats by using a closed-to-nature silviculture approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for agricultural landscape indicator species (whinchat, sky lark, corn bunting, yellowhammer, lapwing, red-backed shrike, red kite, little owl, black-tailed godwit, wood lark) by 2015, compared with the 1980s level</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for the indicator species of white stork and black-tailed godwit by 2015, compared with the 1970s level</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for forest bird indicator species (grey headed woodpecker, black woodpecker, middle spotted woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, lesser spotted eagle, black stork, marsh tit, coal tit, willow tit, wood warbler) by 2015, which would be at least 20% above the current level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed targets and indicators for the agricultural landscape and forests are identical to the new targets for the Biodiversity Index of the German Sustainability Strategy. This ensures a higher acceptance and connectivity with the political level and better data availability. The Biodiversity Index is based on the population development of 51 bird species which indicates the quality of the habitats as well as the population development of many other species in the landscape.

The following tables (10.1. – 10.3.) give an overview about the specific issues within the three overall issues identified and specific objectives and targets.

Table 10.1 shows that for agricultural landscapes, the main issue is the decrease of biodiversity due to changing agricultural practices. There is a need to achieve a defined target value for agricultural landscape indicator species by using sustainable land use management to conserve and support the diversity of species and habitats. Specific measures, regulations and support of low intensive agriculture are essential to reduce nutrient input from agriculture and to prevent removal or abandonment of landscape features.

Table 10.2 shows that many alluvial plains and wetlands are threatened by a change of land use. To preserve and promote the diversity of species and habitats a target value for defined indicator species must be achieved by using a range of measures, regulations and support.

Table 10.3 shows that intensive forest management reduces biodiversity. To protect and promote the variety of species and habitats a close-to-nature approach to forest management is required in addition to different measures, regulations and support to achieve a goal value for defined forest indicator species.
### Table 10.1.: Objectives and targets for agricultural landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing agricultural practices leading to decrease of biodiversity</td>
<td>Conserve and support of the diversity of species and habitats in the agricultural landscape by adopting sustainable land management</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for agricultural landscape indicator species (whinchat, sky lark, corn bunting, yellowhammer, lapwing, red-backed shrike, red kite, little owl, black-tailed godwit, wood lark) by 2015, compared to the 1980 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrient load from agriculture reduces biodiversity</td>
<td>Reduction of the nutrient load from agriculture</td>
<td>Reduction of the annual nitrogen surplus from 117 kg/ha to 80 kg/ha by 2010 Increase of organic farming to 20% of land used for agriculture by 2010 Environmental compliance with the nitrate directive resp. the fertilizer ordinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air emissions of ammonia and nitrogen lead to floristic losses in oligotrophic habitats</td>
<td>Reduction of the immissions from the air</td>
<td>Reduction of the ammonia emissions from animal husbandry to 400,000 t per year by 2010 (according to guideline 2001/81/EC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of landscape features or lack of management leads to a decrease of animal and plant species</td>
<td>Preservation and increase of networks of landscape features by establishing a legally protected biotope network Extensification of agriculture with re-establishment of richly structured, small-scale cultivated areas Appropriate payments for the cultivation and care of hedges and pollarded willows</td>
<td>Habitat connections with typical landscape features of the natural geographic region to cover a minimum density of 1-2% of the agriculturally productive land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of grassland reducing biodiversity</td>
<td>Maintain the percentage of grassland Maintenance of traditional, less intensive land uses</td>
<td>By 2010 preserving and promoting less intensive, semi-natural biotopes on at least 7 to 10% of whole the area of Germany Maintenance of 30 % of agriculturally productive land as grassland Development of oligotrophic and dry grassland on approx. 200,000 hectares agriculturally productive land, which is at present not managed at low intensity Clearly defining permanent grassland All application land, which was not under crops some time between 1993 and 2002, should be classified as grassland Definition of a maximum stocking density of 1.5 livestock units per hectare in environmental sensitive areas Feeding with predominantly home produced fodder Percentage of less intensive grassland at least 30% of the grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive agriculture reducing meadow birds (loss of fallow, large fields, extensive harvest of agriculture and grassland farming)</td>
<td>Low intensity agriculture Retention and low intensity management of cultivated field embankments, retaining stubble, increasing crop variety, reducing field size Avoid bird breeding losses by adopting sensitive harvesting techniques to avoid nest sites (e.g. harvesting from centre of field outwards, leaving unharvested areas around nests, changing times of cultivation, protecting individual nests and broods etc.)</td>
<td>Percentage of low intensity or unused arable farm land at least 10% of farm land Percentage of less intensively cultivated field embankments at least 5% of arable farm land Percentage of stubble fallow at least 10% of arable farm land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10.2.: Objectives and targets for alluvial plains and wetlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing land use leading to decrease of alluvial plains and wetlands</td>
<td>Preserve and promote the diversity of species and habitats in alluvial plains and humid areas by sustainable land use</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for the indicator species of white stork and black-tailed godwit by 2015, compared to the 1970s level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage of wetlands and alluvial plains reduces floristic biodiversity</td>
<td>Protecting wetlands, renaturalisation and reactivation of potential wetlands and alluvial plains by rise of the ground-water level and dyke redeployment</td>
<td>Prohibiting drainage of alluvial plains and wetlands Doubling the area subject to flooding by 2020 Renaturation of at least 50% of artificially improved or canalised smaller streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overgrazing and over-fertilization of alluvial plains and wetlands and conversion to intensive grassland reduces meadow birds and white stork</td>
<td>Low-intensity use of alluvial plains and wetlands</td>
<td>Preserving and promoting less intensive, semi-natural biotopes by 2010 on at least 7 to 10% of the whole of Germany Developing humid and wet grasslands on approx. 300,000 hectares of agriculturally productive land, which is at present not managed at low intensity Defining a maximum stocking density of 1.5 livestock units per hectare in environmentally sensitive areas Prohibiting the use of soluble mineral fertilisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrub encroachment on abandoned wetlands reduces breeding possibilities for ground nesting birds</td>
<td>Maintaining traditional agricultural land use practices over the whole area</td>
<td>Higher payments for managing HNV grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afforestation of alluvial plains with non-native tree species reduces biodiversity</td>
<td>Prohibiting afforestation of alluvial plains with non-native tree species Protecting and promoting alluvial forests</td>
<td>Managing alluvial forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria Clearly defining the requirements for good technical practice in forestry Developing alluvial forests on approx. 200,000 hectares (15% of the present agriculturally productive land of alluvial plains)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10.3.: Objectives and targets for forests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive forest management reducing biodiversity in forests</td>
<td>Protect and promote the diversity of species and habitats by using a closed-to-nature silviculture approach</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for forest bird indicator species (grey headed woodpecker, black woodpecker, middle spotted woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, lesser spotted eagle, black stork, marsh tit, coal tit, willow tit, wood warbler) by 2015, which would be at least 20% above the current level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small percentage of mature stands and deadwood and unused areas reducing biodiversity</td>
<td>Increasing clearly the percentage of mature stands and deadwood and developing as dynamic forest processes by designating large-scale forest reserves and unused reference areas, promoting natural regeneration with native tree species, increasing the rotation period</td>
<td>Protecting natural and semi-natural biotopes on 3-5% of the whole area of Germany by 2010 Designating large-scale forest reserves where forest exploitation is not allowed on at least 5% of the forest area Designating at least 5% of production forests as unused reference areas Leaving at least 10% of the current growing stock as standing and lying deadwood of different types Managing all forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria Preserving and promoting 'islands' of mature trees and other groups in deciduous forests over 120 years through later exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draining humid and wet forests reducing specialized animal and plant species</td>
<td>Preserving and re-establishing humid and wet forests</td>
<td>Designating humid and wet forests as forest reserve (nature reserve or forest reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afforestation with non-native tree species (especially coniferous trees) reducing biodiversity</td>
<td>Preserving and promoting native tree species (especially beech), promoting natural regeneration with native species, defining a minimum percentage of native tree species</td>
<td>Managing forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria Clearly defining the requirements to good technical practice in forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The high density of forest tracks affects the forest microclimate decreasing animal species that are sensitive to disturbance</td>
<td>Preserving large, non-fragmented forest areas</td>
<td>Stopping government aid for construction of new forest tracks Promoting the conversion of forest tracks to nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Addressing the environmental issues

In chapter 3, the continuous decline of biodiversity was identified as the main environmental problem for rural development in Germany. Based on this analysis, potential goals and priorities for rural development programmes in the period 2007 – 2013 were defined from an environmental and nature conservation point of view. The following section addresses the question of how these goals can be achieved and what changes will be necessary to make progress.

The following assumptions and observations provide a basis for the recommendations that follow:

- It is not possible to talk about the rural area in Germany. Rural areas are diverse and differ from one another in both socio-economic and ecological aspects, and in the changes and trends to their settlement structure, social and demographic make up.

- The development of alternative non-agricultural income has become important, particularly for economically significant rural areas in Germany given the continuing decline in the economic significance of the agricultural sector. Leisure activities, recreation and tourism will increase in importance.

- The approach to rural development is changing both at the European and German levels. It is evolving from a sector- and measure-oriented, hierarchically controlled instrument towards a model more related to sustainable rural development taking sustainability as its guiding light, encourages the use of endogenous (local) resources and promoting area-based, cross-sectoral and partnership approaches.

- Sustainable rural development requires new regional governance structures, changed administrative structures, new relations between state, private industry and civil society, and the emergence of new regional institutions, through “top-down” and “bottom up” initiatives.

- Agriculture and rural areas play an essential environmental and nature conservation role and that is increasing in importance. In addition to the use of hierarchical and market-oriented approaches to governance, the acceptance and success of nature conservation in rural areas depends heavily on the involvement of relevant actors and the integration of different sectors (governance through partnership and networks).

- In Germany, there is low acceptance of nature conservation. The designation process of Natura 2000 sites has lead to a further decrease in acceptance and has contributed to Natura 2000 having a negative image (partly also among conservationists). This lack of acceptance has become a crucial limitation for the achievement of nature conservation interests.

- Production partnerships between nature conservation and other sectors and user groups are possible. Nature conservation can act as a motor of rural development
and can contribute to regional competitiveness. From an environmental and nature conservation point of view, the development and promotion of such initiatives (win-win situations) should become a main focus in the next funding period, to build on successful examples to promote the process of change towards sustainable rural development.

Against this background and the results of the ongoing funding period (as reported in chapter 2), the next section makes recommendations for the development of programs in the next funding period.

4.1. **Recommendation - Goal-oriented, learning programmes**

Rural development programmes should be transformed from the current measure-based approach into a goal-oriented programme approach. This would require a medium to long-term changes. Monitoring and evaluation should be systematically used as supporting instruments, and not just carried out as a “tiresome compulsory requirement” – which unfortunately has too often been the case until now. For the forthcoming funding period 2007 – 2013, the following specific proposals are made:

**Goal development with a mixture of top-down and bottom-up approach**

**Step 1 – national strategy:** The national strategy should define the main goals for rural development for Germany and should result in a simple set quantified SMART\(^\text{15}\) main goals (fewer than 15) that can be well communicated. These goals should specify what the guiding image of sustainable rural development means in practice, and provide a guideline for federal state programmes. The national strategy goals should be more than a sum of the goals that have to be achieved in the framework of the federal state rural development programmes. When developing goals, those that already have politically agreed goals and guidelines (e.g. like the sustainability strategy for Germany\(^\text{16}\)) should be included as much as possible. With regard to national goals, there does not appear to be another way of proceeding, either politically nor methodically. Chapter 3 indicates the kind of goals that should be adopted from an environmental and nature conservation point of view.

**Step 2 – rural development programmes:** In the second step - against the background of the national strategy - the federal states define (programme related) SMART goals that they want to achieve in the framework of “their” rural development programme by 2013. In doing so, particulars are obligatory about what contribution the programme is expected to make to the achievement of the approx. 15 main goals of the national strategy. This makes it possible to determine the contributions of all federal state programmes to the

\(^{15}\) SMART goals = specific, measurable, attractive, realistic and terminated goals

\(^{16}\) „Perspektiven für Deutschland. Unsere Strategie für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung”; Bundesregierung (April 2002)
achievement of the national goals, as well as to compare the federal state programmes with one another.

**Continuously surveying the targeted contribution and its achievement through a mix of instruments**

All measures should be evaluated to assess their contribution achieving the goals identified before, during and after the funding period. The monitoring and evaluation system used should generate the maximum amount of information relevant to decision-making and programme development with a minimum of operating expense. This requires the “classic” (fairly laborious) methods of measuring outputs and results to be supplemented by “light” assessment systems such as the development path analysis or process related analysis (e.g. analysis of project selection systems).

**Intensifying communication and use of evaluation results**

The results of monitoring and evaluation should be published once a year in a form suitable to key target audiences and be subjected to (political) assessment. For example, at federal level this should address the question of whether rural development has made progress in achieving the main goals set and the contribution the rural development programmes have made to this. The communication and discussion of the evaluation results should be supported by the national networking centre and an annual conference on “rural development” (see below).

### 4.2. Recommendation - LEADER axis „generating income from Natura 2000“

**Need to allocate up to 10 % of funds**

German rural development programmes for 2007 – 2013, should use the LEADER approach to “generate income from Natura 2000”. Five to ten percent\(^\text{17}\) of total funds should be spent on this priority. The processes for developing this approach should build on experiences from the “nature conservation through co-operation” initiative for the LEADER+ model regions (see case studies in chapter 5) and from the LEADER axis “generating income from nature”.

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\(^\text{17}\) In the current funding period, approx. 125 million € of EU funds are spent for the LEADER+ axis „valorisation of nature“ (own estimation, based on the share of LEADER+ regions with the axis “valorisation of nature” (76) in the German LEADER+ regions (148) and the funds that are at hand in Germany for LEADER+ in the period 2000 – 2006 (247 mio. €)). This is equivalent to a share of about 2.5% in total EU funds that are at hand for the promotion of rural development in Germany (approx. 4.6 billion €).
Using success stories to promote use of the approach
Successful examples of sustainable and environmentally friendly rural development should be systematically promoted and communicated. In this context, success means both economically successful and ecologically compatible forms of development. The activities of these successful regions should contribute to addressing current environmental problems. These include for example the low acceptance of nature conservation, and the negative image, the poor publicity and lack of political support (and strong partners) for Natura 2000 in Germany.

Achieving favourable conditions in large protected areas
To achieve this goal, action needs to focus on regions with a high potential and where there is a strong likelihood of success in integrating nature conservation and rural development. The research associated with the LEADER model regions initiative has identified 12 key success factors. These include large protected areas (biosphere reserves, natural parks and national parks) and large-area nature reserves where there are particularly favourable conditions for achieving synergy between nature conservation and other economically relevant sectors, or in other words, to create win-win situations (e.g. tourism, regional marketing). To seize these chances, all elements of the EAFRD regulation should be used and, first of all, systematically linked to one another. In addition, the large protected areas have structures and nature conservation actors available which enable nature conservation interests to be taken account of in a system of co-operative rural development. Large protected areas are estimated to cover about half of German Natura 2000 areas.

Incorporating Leader into the national strategy and federal state programmes
The LEADER axis „generating income from nature“ should be incorporated into both the national strategy and the rural development programmes at the federal state level. This will ensure that the “weak” interests of nature conservation are given “top down” support but without dictating too much to the regional level. Simultaneously, nationwide exchange and networking should be promoted, to enable learning and communication processes between regions. The planned national networking centre has a major task to fulfill here.

Assessing and communicating environmental and other outcomes from Leader
At the same time as promoting the successes of Leader, it is important to evaluate both the „soft“ effects (e.g. acceptance of nature conservation, new co-operations, etc.), and the “hard” effects or outcomes (e.g. economy related outcomes, value added, jobs) including nature conservation outcomes. This is needed both to inform and develop the regional development process and to communicate the results inside and outside the region. However, amongst other things, this will require the objectives and targets of nature conservation to be much more clearly specified than has been the case so far.

4.3. Recommendation - Enhancing of the GAK

With an annual financial volume of about 1.2 billion €\(^{19}\), the “Common Task for Improving Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection” (German abbreviation: GAK) represents the central co-financing instrument for rural development programmes in Germany. In doing so, the GAK has a “bottleneck” effect when it comes to implementing the EU regulation, tightly limiting the eligible spectrum (measures and participants) particularly in the field of nature conservation\(^{20}\). Especially in financially weak federal states, the result is that environmental protection and nature conservation measures are non-existent or available only to a minor degree. We suggest a substantial enhancement of the GAK in the following fields:

i. Revision of the funding criteria

The spectrum of measures needs to be adapted to the EAFRD regulation. From an environment and nature conservation point of view, this (amongst other things) means:

- Starting to provide compensation payments to farmers and foresters with environment specific restrictions (“Natura 2000 compensation”)
- Targeting and differentiating compensation payments for disadvantaged areas based on ecological criteria.
- Landscape management and nature conservation contracts, further measures targeted at the conservation of biodiversity in agriculture and forestry, and the goal to establish a national biotope network.
-Extending eligibility for agri-environmental measures and Natura 2000 compensation to non-farmers.

To be able to ensure and finance the reform of the GAK, any support measures that act against environmental protection and nature conservation should be redesigned or removed\(^{21}\).

ii. Participation and Evaluation

Essential crucial principles of sustainable rural development need to be incorporated into the GAK and filled with life. This for example includes the participation of environmental actors in the programming of the GAK (e.g. in the PLANAK\(^{22}\)) and the evaluation of the GAK, e.g. with regard to its effects on environmental protection and nature conservation.

\(^{19}\) In 2005, of which 60% are federal funds and 40% federal state funds

\(^{20}\) In this context, the argument is put forward that the GAK cannot cover the whole spectrum of measures of the EAFRD regulation due to constitutional competences and GAK law. The competence for nature conservation (FFH compensation, implementation of the water framework directive, contract nature conservation) and landscape care is solely incumbent upon the federal states.

\(^{21}\) e.g. investment aids and land consolidation schemes that do not have positive environmental effects, e.g. road building, irrigation measures, first afforestation outside of reforestation areas.

\(^{22}\) PLANAK = German abbreviation for “Planning Committee Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection”
iii. Allocation of funds
In the medium-term, the GAK should be extended to a “Common Task for sustainable rural developments”, of which
- 35% of funds should be spent on a new element “environmental protection, nature conservation, landscape care and maintenance of agriculture in marginal locations”;
- 25% of funds should be for organic farming and for keeping animals in their natural environment.
- 40% of funds allocated to integrated rural development and innovative, sustainable economic initiatives in rural areas.

iv. Using the existing scope of the GAK and revising legal regulations
Incorporation of nature conservation requirements within the GAK have been rejected so far with the argument that the legal framework does not allow for the development of nature conservation oriented support measures. However, new studies23 have shown that there is scope to do so within the legal framework and this should be better used in the short term. In the medium term, the GAK’s legal framework needs to be enhanced and a new definition of the Common Task provided to increase the significance of environmental and nature conservation aspects for rural development (Natura 2000, Water Framework Directive).

4.4. Recommendation - Qualifications, exchanges and networking
The promotion of sustainable rural development is a relatively new and ambitious concept, whose successful implementation requires further research, appropriate qualifications for the actors involved and a continuous learning process at all levels. In-service qualifications for the relevant actors, exchange of information and experience and co-operation between researchers, consultants and evaluators and those practically involved should be intensified24. The following aspects are proposed:

i. Improvements to the extension services
Extension services need to be enhanced in relation to their goals, content, target groups, methods and the evaluation of their effects. The current focus of extension services


24 Reforming the organisation of agricultural extension in Germany: Lessons for other countries. Volker Hoffmann, John Lamers and Andrew D. Kidd. January 2000
- Landwirtschaftliche Beratung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Organisationsformen und aktuelle Probleme. Volker Hoffmann. April 2002
needs to be broadened beyond its current concern with agricultural production, related production technology and the agricultural sector. Against a background of diminishing funds, governmental financing of extension services needs to be strengthened in sectors where there is a strong public interest. This includes the need to address aspects related to ecologically compatible and environmentally friendly cultivation (e.g. consulting on the use of nitrogen fertilizers) and providing extension services for the actors and institutions involved in village and regional development.

ii. Evaluation of the nature conservation effects of rural development

The monitoring and evaluation of the nature conservation effects of rural development should be systematically improved, and promotion exchange and discussion of the results and methods used should be intensified. The aim is not to undertake excessive monitoring, but to target it more effectively on policies and practice. New instruments such as process evaluation, target hazard evaluation or hot spot evaluations should be tested and perhaps used as flanking measures. The development and implementation of minimum and quality standards seems necessary to evaluate nature conservation effects of rural development programmes, to make sure that similar types of nature conservation effects comparably evaluated, and to avoid problems (gaps or duplication) due to methodical differences.

iii. An annual „Sustainable Rural Development“ Conference

The establishment of an annual conference on „Sustainable Rural Development“ would enable essential exchanges of experiences to take place between politicians, administrators, evaluators and state, federal states, and regional associations. The event could be based on an annual report on the implementation, results and the perspectives of rural development. The event would enable exchange of experiences, and promotion of innovative and successful approaches and would help in the process of continuous enhancement of rural development programmes. It would also help to politically strengthen the “sustainable rural development” approach at the interface between agricultural and environmental / nature conservation policy.

iv. Developing the National rural development observatory

The national observatory should undertake further essential tasks and provide other support related promoting of qualifications and competences, exchange of information, networking and implementation of the proposals outlined above. The observatory should offer a service to all actors who may be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of rural development, and should also cover those involved in extension and evaluation. The relevant target groups should be involved in planning the national observatory’s activities, in order to ensure a maximum of targeted precision. The development of the annual conference on “Sustainable Rural Development” (mentioned above) should be one of the national observatory’s main tasks.
5. Case Studies

5.1. Case study I: LEADER+ and nature conservation

For the LEADER+ Community Initiative in Germany 247 mio. € are allocated from EU funds. This support 148 local development groups from 2000 – 2006. More than half\(^{25}\) of the German LEADER+ regions have committed themselves to the priority theme “making the best of natural and cultural resources”. This section assesses the performance of the LEADER+ Community Initiative from a nature conservation point of view using six so-called LEADER+ model regions as case studies.

**Background:** The LEADER approach is a form of governance that combines the so-called eight LEADER features: area-based approach, bottom-up approach, local partnership, innovation, multi-sectoral integration, inter-territorial co-operation (including transnational co-operation), networking and decentralised management and financing.

From a political science point of view, LEADER represents a new type of governance in regional development / rural development, which stimulates processes of co-operative self-governance and self-help and which actively involves the regional population\(^{26}\). This approach to governance moving towards co-operation and networks has its origin in the limitations of hierarchical (i.a. top-down) types of governance. For example, in nature conservation policy, where protected areas are defined by law and like e.g. in Natura 2000 areas, can face much resistance and acceptability problems especially from land owners\(^{27}\).

**LEADER+ model regions:** The Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture (BMVEL) and environmental NGOs started a joint initiative in 1999 to identify the significance of nature conservation and the potential of nature to support the development of rural areas. They also wanted to provide specific examples. Under the title “Co-operation of agriculture, nature conservation, handcraft, trade and commerce”, six regions were chosen to demonstrate within the LEADER+ framework the opportunities that nature conservation can offer to rural development. The regions were Dübener Heide, Isenhagener Land, Uckermärkische Seen, Rügen, Südlicher Steigerwald und Thüringer Wald.

The following figure resp. table shows where the six regions are located and supplies some basic data:

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25 76 regions according to the database of the German LEADER+ observatory (www.leaderplus.de)
27 Barriers to nature conservation in Germany: a model explaining opposition to protected areas. Susanne Stoll-Kleemann. 2000
Figure 4: Location of the LEADER+ model regions

![Location of the LEADER+ model regions](image)

Table 11: Basic regional data for the LEADER+ model regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area in km²</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants + inhab. / km²</th>
<th>Unemployment rate</th>
<th>Large protected areas</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weak points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dübener Heide</td>
<td>approx. 1,000</td>
<td>70,000 + 86</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>nature park</td>
<td>natural landscape, much honorary work, people have a strong emotional bond with their home country</td>
<td>administration (two federal states), high unemployment rate, lack of resources and strong partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isenhagener Land</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>50,000 + 50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>experience in co-operation, nature experience center as tourist designation</td>
<td>transport infrastructure, mono-structural problem region, low degree of regional co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rügen</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>74,400 + 77</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>nature park, biosphere reserve</td>
<td>natural landscape, attractiveness, tourism, local initiative for regional development</td>
<td>strong structural change, east-west divide, many approaches not synchronised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Südlicher Steigerwald</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>16,400 + 53</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>nature park</td>
<td>straightforward region, culture, social infrastructure</td>
<td>political scepticism, abandonment of agricultural enterprises, expected structural change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thüringer Wald</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>179,000 + 96</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>nature park, biosphere reserve</td>
<td>natural landscape, tourism, successes</td>
<td>out-commuter, the size of the region, lack of co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uckermärkische Seen</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>20,000 + 22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>nature park</td>
<td>natural landscape, competent promoter, wide engagement</td>
<td>Structural weakness, lack of networking, high unemployment rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administrative implementation – LEADER+ between ideals and reality

An associate research project “Accompanying political science analysis of processes of sustainable regional development”28, LEADER implementation processes were analysed for more than two years in the six model regions. It became clear that there is a gap between the LEADER ideals mentioned above and reality due to the interaction between the different levels involved (EU, federal states, regions). The most important points identified were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADER+ Ideals</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bottom-up approach with a wide range of competences at the local level (generation of regional development concepts, project selection).</td>
<td>Project selection depends on the scrutiny carried out by the appropriating authority. Existing scopes are used to a different extent, even within a federal state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LAGs represent all interests relevant to a region in a balanced way.</td>
<td>LAGs are partly an elitist circle of „the usual suspects“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER+ projects should be experimental and have a pilot function.</td>
<td>Experiments cannot take place at all, because the measures eligible for finance have to be part of the mainstream programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The selection of LEADER regions is done through a robust competitive process.</td>
<td>There is no real competition and LEADER is implemented area-wide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This reality of implementation has lead to some frustration in the regions and also has a negative effect on implementation. Different procedures and regulations apply in different federal states, due to the federal system and the responsibility of the federal states. This hampers cross-federal state exchange of experience and learning processes. It is difficult to justify in the context of the relatively small budget for LEADER.

Type of projects supported

In the LEADER+ model regions, by May 2005 a total of about 70 projects has been approved and were being implemented following the approval of the LAGs and the regional development concepts in early to mid 2002.

The most common type of project accepted was in the sector of environmentally friendly tourism which accounted for 30% of all projects, followed by regional and direct marketing (18%), culture (10%), and education and training (9%). These four sectors together accounted for 70% of all projects. Other funding sectors, such as renewable energy, renewable resources, IT media and health account for no more than 5% in each case. Only 2 of the overall 70 projects could be classed as “classical” nature conservation initiatives.

28
Results and effects

So far, available surveys on the results and effects of LEADER+ focus mainly on analysing the “soft” effects (e.g. new forms of co-operation, new development structures etc) with generally positive findings. The “hard” effects (e.g. jobs, value added, and nature conservation) could not be evaluated (as discussed in the mid-time evaluations) yet, because projects are still at an early state of implementation).

The evaluations of the “soft effects” of LEADER+ confirm the effects that were identified in the LEADER II framework. These can be summarised for the environmental sector as follows:\textsuperscript{29} LEADER has:

- contributed to raising public environmental awareness.
- contributed to emphasising the significance of local resources, including places where these cannot yet be profitably used in the short term.
- shown that an area-based strategy is necessary to generate income from nature but it must not be limited to nature reserve areas; it needs to take all the entire resources of the relevant region into consideration.
- shown that environment can be used as a basis for developing regional identity. It lends itself to being a principle theme, for a comprehensive area-based strategy.
- shown that environmental protection can not only revitalise a stagnating economy in a state of crisis, but can also contribute to creating new jobs and developing new types of work.

Overall the research\textsuperscript{30} concludes that experience in the six model regions relating to the implementation of nature protection measures has been positive. However, it points out that LEADER+ is not just a nature protection programme. Improved co-operation with other actors can play an important role for nature conservation. It also confirmed LEADER+ is not really able to promote ‘classical’ approaches to nature conservation. So conservationists are facing the challenge of approaching other actors and seeking co-operation, if they want to play a creative role in LEADER-based processes of sustainable regional development.

Conclusions for the 2007 – 2013 funding period

The LEADER approach is particularly successful in regions and areas where, by means of co-operation, it brings advantages to all parties involved, developing so-called ‘winning coalitions’. With this in mind, According to this, a LEADER approach with both a thematic and geographical concentration would appear to be appropriate for the 2007 – 2013

\textsuperscript{29} European observatory LEADER (2000): Environmental competitiveness. Creating a territorial development strategy in the light of the LEADER experience; dossier no. 6, part 3 “Rural innovation”

\textsuperscript{30} German: „Politikwissenschaftliche Begleitanalyse von Prozessen nachhaltiger Regionalentwicklung”; Böcher, Michael (2004)
period. From a nature conservation point of view, generating income from nature in large protected areas has the best prospects of success (see chapter 4).

In the future, a joint development of LEADER at the federal level could improve administrative efficiency for implementation. In relation to nature conservation this would make it possible to overcome the problem of natural landscapes that cross federal state boundaries. However, federal states are likely to oppose such a shift of competences.

It remains largely unclear how it is planned to mainstream the LEADER approach in Germany for the next funding period, and whether essential characteristics such as the potential to innovate might be threatened.

5.2. Case study II: Financing Natura 2000

Now that the designation process of Natura 2000 sites in Germany has almost been completed, increased attention is being paid to the question of how to manage and finance the sites. The annual costs of the financing of Natura 2000 in Germany are estimated to be 620 mio. € per year and shall be covered primarily by existing financial tools. Environmental actors consider the 2007 – 2013 rural development programmes to be the main financial source. Against this background, the following questions will be discussed:

- What factors are crucial for a successful financing of Natura 2000 in rural development programmes?
- What is the current status of these success factors?
- What conclusions emerge from the current situation?

Success factors for financing Natura 2000

The research project on “Integrating nature conservation goals into the promotion of Structural funds”, has identified success factors for the financing of Natura 2000. This used evidence from political science theories and comparable practical experiences31 backed up by expert interviews. They are based on the central assumption that the financing of Natura 2000 is the result of a political negotiating process that is subject to certain conditions.

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31 - Brendle, Uwe (1999): „Musterlösungen im Naturschutz – Politische Bausteine für erfolgreiches Handeln“; Bundesamt für Naturschutz
Table 12: Overview of success factors for financing of Natura 2000 in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success factor</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-driven pressure and readiness for solutions / personal concernment</td>
<td>The relevant actors at all political levels consider the continuous loss of biodiversity to be a crucial problem and regard the financing of Natura 2000 as a realistic approach to solving it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision / image</td>
<td>Natura 2000 is an integral part of a desirable and practical vision for the future of rural development. It can be well communicated, making clear the necessary process of change, motivating the persons involved in making changes and can efficiently co-ordinate their activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win-win situations</td>
<td>Through the financing of Natura 2000, the relevant actors contribute to the promotion of biodiversity, while simultaneously deriving economical, social and political benefit, for example through the generating income from Natura 2000 from tourism or regional marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/ campaign competence</td>
<td>The loss of biodiversity and the associated reasons, vision, strategy, costs and benefits from the maintenance of biodiversity are promoted to the relevant actors in a target group-oriented way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong actors</td>
<td>The financing of Natura 2000 is supported at all political levels by key-actors within and beyond environmental protection and nature conservation, particularly at the federal state level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successes</td>
<td>Motivation and encouragement to finance Natura 2000 are systematically increased through the communication of existing success stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>The financial frameworks on the EU, state and federal state level and the nature conservation plans make the financing of Natura 2000 possible and have a beneficial effect on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>The measures necessary for the implementation of Natura 2000 are eligible for EU funding, co-financed by the state and are integrated into the rural development programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity</td>
<td>The proposals for financing Natura 2000 can be connected with the relevant instruments, structures and political frameworks of rural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange and co-ordination</td>
<td>There are suitable structures in place to enable an efficient and timely internal exchange of information and to ensure co-ordination and positioning takes place between the different environmental actors involved in planning of the programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences and resources</td>
<td>The environmental actors from authorities and NGOs involved in the programming have sufficient competences, resources to manage the planning and participation process efficiently, and gain successful commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Championing the approach’</td>
<td>Convincing environmental actors from authorities and associations involved systematically promote the financing of Natura 2000 at all political levels persistently and patiently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current status of the success factors

The environmental NGO WWF Germany organised an expert workshop “Rural development 2007 – 2013. A chance for environment and Natura 2000”, March 15-16 2005 in Berlin, which included an evaluation by participants of the current status of the above success factors in Germany as follows:

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32 Nature conservation representatives from associations and authorities in Germany
On the whole, the participants tended to have a rather negative evaluation of the current status of the success factors. At best, the success factors (apart from two exceptions) were judged as “this applies only partly”. The crucial weak points are seen in the following three fields that are judged as “this applies to a minor degree”:

- **Vision / Image**: The people involved who are concerned with the planning and implementation of rural development programmes do not have a positive image of Natura 2000.
- **Communication**: The loss of biodiversity and the reasons for it and the ‘road map’ needed to address the problems and benefit from implementation of Natura 2000 are not communicated adequately.
- **Strong actors**: The financing of Natura 2000 is not supported by influential and assertive key-actors beyond the scope of nature conservation.

There seems to be a causal connection between the three weak points identified, because having a workable vision / image is seen as an essential basis for successful communication and plays role in attracting strong partners.

The negative current status of these three success factors is judged to be particularly critical, as they are the key factors needed to starting the change process, or so-called “unfreezing” (unfreezing – moving – refreezing). A clear vision as the target for change

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33 1= this does not apply; 2= this applies to a minor degree; 3= this applies only partly; 4= this applies for the most part; 5= this applies fully
must be convincingly communicated by strong actors, in order to bring initial energy into a change process.

The participants traced back the reasons for the negative current state of the success factors mainly to the Natura 2000 site designation process which was mostly done in a “hierarchical / scientific” way. The communication of the objectives and advantages, the creation of acceptance and the involvement of concerned people were not a central focus at this stage, but need to gain increasing importance in future, against the background of the “integration option” chosen for the financing.

Conclusions

The targeted promotion and communication of success stories of both environmentally and economically successful rural development are expected to be of central importance for eliminating identified weak points. Particularly favourable conditions for the achievement of such successes (see chapter 4) are seen in the application of the LEADER approach in large protected areas. Such successes could act as a kind of mainspring for the further development and communication of the vision of sustainable rural development, and encourage the involvement of strong partners. According to Kotter34, such a vision has to meet the following criteria for being successful:

- Conceivable: The vision provides a clear image of the future.
- Desirable: The vision complies with the long-term goals of all involved parties.
- Realisable: The vision has realistic and achievable goals.
- Focused: The vision is clear enough for serving as a guiding principle.
- Communicable: The vision can easily be communicated and convincingly be depicted within five minutes.

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6. Summary

Rural Development in Germany 2000 – 2006 – The situation

According to the German constitution and federal political system, the responsibility for rural development (and for nature protection) lies at the level of the 16 Bundesländer. In Germany, the total EAGGF funds for 2000 – 2006 amount to 9 billion € and support:

- 16 rural development programmes (5.308,6 Mio. € EAGGF Guarantee),
- 5 rural development measures within Structural Fund Objective 1 programming (3.442,2 Mio. € EAGGF Guidance) and
- 14 LEADER+ programmes (262,8 Mio € EAGGF Guidance).

The main priorities i.e. the financed measures vary significantly between the Länder. For example the allocation for agri-environmental measures ranges from 9% to 62% of the total EAGGF contribution.

The key findings of ELCo project for the 2000 – 2006 rural development programmes in Germany can be summarised as follows:

**Diversity**: The diverse rural development programmes reflect the diversity of the situation in different Bundesländer (north-south; east-west) and different political priorities and financial possibilities.

**Strategic approach**: A clear strategic approach with objectives, targets and priorities is missing in most rural development programmes. The programmes are currently an incoherent mixture of already existing measures.

**Co-ordinating and co-financing**: The central co-ordinating (between the federal and the Länder-levels) and the framework of the GAK co-financing instrument is a limiting factor from the environmental perspective. There is no coordination mechanism on the environmental side between the federal and the Länder level.

**Evaluation**: Evaluation has had little influence on steering or refining the programmes. Especially in the area of nature protection specific objectives and indicators are missing.

**Partnership**: Although some progress has been made, participation of relevant rural development actors is generally considered to be unsatisfactory. In a vertical direction partnership ends at the Länder level (except for LEADER).

**Delivery mechanisms**: The over-complex administration and control mechanisms tend to result in funding of easy to handle measures which can be completed within a financial year. Such processes are a particular problem for more targeted (and complex) environmental approaches.
**Extension services**: Extension services are currently too much focused on the agricultural sector and agricultural production. They should be extended to provide a broader range of services (i.e. marketing, environmental conservation, off-farm activities).

**Economic effects**: According to the mid-term evaluations the effects on improving employment can only be identified for a small part of the funds. The evaluators noted relatively high positive effects on income in the agricultural sector.

**Ecological effects**: Although in general, the mid-term evaluations tended to positively evaluate the environmental effects, there are concerns about several critical aspects: intensive farming areas are not reached (e.g. by agri-environmental schemes); there may be major “windfall effects” (i.e. payment for doing very little) related to horizontal agri-environmental measures; and the measures are unable to prevent abandonment of extensively used agricultural land.

**Environmental issues and objectives – The needs**

The analysis of the current environmental situation (Air, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Landscape, Soil, Water) shows that the continuing loss of biodiversity is the overarching problem from an environmental point of view in relation to rural development. Most of the 500 different habitats in Germany are considered to be endangered (69%). Of all known German mammals, more than one third (38%) are endangered and 13% are already extinct. About 28.7% of the 14,000 plant species are endangered and 3.7% have become extinct. About 90% of threatened flora and fauna mainly occur in areas characterised by an extensive land use (BfN, 1999).

The main threats in relation to rural development can be summarised as following:

- Change of agricultural practices lead to a decrease of biodiversity.
- Change of land use in alluvial plains and wetlands lead to loss of biodiversity.
- Intensive forest management reduces biodiversity in forests.

For this three selected environmental issues the tables below summarize the objectives, indicators and targets which have been developed for the next generation of rural development programmes in Germany.
**Table 13: Agricultural landscape**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Issue</th>
<th>Changing agricultural practices leading to decrease of biodiversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Objective</td>
<td>Conservation and support of the diversity of species and habitats in the agricultural landscape by sustainable land use management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Indicator</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for agricultural landscape indicator species (whinchat, sky lark, corn bunting, yellowhammer, lapwing, red-backed shrike, red kite, little owl, black-tailed godwit, wood lark) by 2015, compared with the 1980 level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Specific Targets | - Reduction of the annual nitrogen surplus from 117 kg/ha to 80 kg/ha by 2010  
- Increase of organic farming to 20% of land used for agriculture by 2010.  
- Environmental compliance with the nitrate directive resp. the fertilizer ordinance  
- Reduction of the ammonia emissions from animal husbandry to 400,000 t per year by 2010 (Guideline 2001/81/EC)  
- Habitat connections with typical landscape features in the natural geographic region to cover a minimum density of 1-2% of the agriculturally productive land  
- By 2010 preserving and promoting less intensive, semi-natural biotopes on at least 7 to 10% of whole the area of Germany  
- Maintenance of 30% of agriculturally productive land as grassland  
- Development of oligotrophic and dry grassland on approx. 200,000 hectares agriculturally productive land, which is at present not managed at low intensity  
- Clear defining permanent grassland  
- All application land, which was not under crops some time between 1993 and 2002, should be classified as grassland  
- Definition of maximum stocking density of 1.5 livestock units per hectare for all environmental sensitive areas  
- Feeding with predominantly home produced fodder  
- Percentage of less intensive grassland at least 30% of the grassland  
- Percentage of low intensity or unused arable farm land at least 10% of farm land  
- Percentage of less intensively cultivated field embankments at least 5% of arable farm land  
- Percentage of stubble fallow at least 10% of arable farm land |

**Table 14: Alluvial plains and wetlands**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Issue</th>
<th>Changing land use leading to decrease of alluvial plains and wetlands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Objective</td>
<td>Preserve and promote the diversity of species and habitats in alluvial plains and humid areas by sustainable land use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Indicator</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for the indicator species of white stork and black-tailed godwit by 2015, compared with the 1970s level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Specific Targets | - Prohibiting drainage of alluvial plains and wetlands. Doubling the area subject to flooding by 2020  
- Renaturation of at least 50% of artificially improved or canalised smaller streams  
- Preserving and promoting less intensive, semi-natural biotopes by 2010 on at least 7 to 10% of the whole of Germany  
- Developing humid and wet grasslands on approx. 300,000 hectares of agriculturally productive land, which is at present not managed at low intensity  
- Defining a maximum stocking density of 1.5 livestock units per hectare for environmental sensitive areas  
- Prohibiting the use of soluble mineral fertilisers  
- Higher payments for managing HNV grassland  
- Managing alluvial forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria  
- Clearly defining the requirements for good technical practice in forestry  
- Developing alluvial forests on approx. 200,000 hectares (15% of the present agriculturally productive land of alluvial plains) |
Table 15: Forests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Issue</th>
<th>Intensive forest management reducing biodiversity in forests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Objective</td>
<td>Protect and promote the diversity of species and habitats by using a closed-to-nature silviculture approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Indicator</td>
<td>Achieve a target value for forest bird indicator species (grey headed woodpecker, black woodpecker, middle spotted woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, nuthatch, lesser spotted eagle, black stork, marsh tit, coal tit, willow tit, wood warbler) by 2015, which would be at least 20% above the current level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific Targets**
- Protecting natural and semi-natural biotopes on 3-5% of the whole area of Germany by 2010
- Designating large-scale forest reserves where forest exploitation is not allowed on at least 5% of the forest area
- Designating at least 5% of production forests as unused reference areas
- Leaving at least 10% of the current growing stock as standing and lying deadwood of different types
- Managing all forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria
- Preserving and promoting ‘islands’ of mature trees and other groups in deciduous forests over 120 years through later exploitation
- Designating humid and wet forests as forest reserve (nature reserve or forest reserve)
- Managing the forests according to FSC- or Naturland-criteria
- Clearly defining the requirements for good technical practice in forestry
- Stopping government aid for construction of new forest tracks
- Promoting the conversion of forest tracks to nature

**Recommendations – The way forward**

The next generation of rural development programmes in Germany for 2007 – 2013 should be targeted towards a sustainable rural development, that ensures economic efficiency, social equity, ecological integrity and cultural identity. To achieve this, the basic principles of sustainable rural development i.e. participation, evaluation, territorial approach, regionalisation and integration (including the environmental dimension) need to be more rigorously considered and implemented. The following specific steps are recommended.

1. At the **European level** adequate financial resources need to be made available in order to fulfil the wide range of ecological (i.e. Natura 2000) and socio-economic objectives of rural development.

2. The next generation of rural development programmes in Germany should stimulate progress towards a more **target-driven strategic and coherent rural development approach**, basing on a sound analysis of the conditions and trends in rural areas the effects of the actual funding. Geographical and thematical priorities need to be established with specific objectives and verifiable targets in order to continuously monitor and evaluate the effects of the use of the public funding.

3. The German **national strategy for rural development** should link the European strategic framework and the Länder programmes and ensure coherence with the national sustainability strategy. The right balance is needed between national guidance and priorities on the one hand and providing sufficient flexibility for the Rural Development Programmes at the Länder level to be adapted to different Länder needs on the on the other.
4. The **central co-financing instrument**, the “Common task for the improvement of the agricultural structures and coastal protection” (GAK) needs to be further developed from being a sector orientated instrument to an instrument for sustainable rural development that is coherent with the EU rural development regulation. If this substantial reform of the GAK is (again) not possible – and this includes for example the reduction of existing measures - then the abolition of the GAK should be considered.

5. **Agri-environmental measures** should be further developed and more clearly focused on key environmental themes and geographical priorities. They should be more strongly regionalised and target-driven. Local actors should be involved in developing the measures.

6. The next programme should place a stronger focus on non-agricultural activities to **improve the economic performance** of rural development programmes and develop opportunities for people leaving the agricultural sector.

7. The partnership principle needs to be strengthened at all levels of the programming and implementation process (both in the National Strategy and the Operational Programmes) and should not – like today - end at the Länder level. Access to information, transparency of process and well qualified partners and related capacity building are essential preconditions for fruitful partnerships.

8. The **LEADER approach** should be strengthened. One clear (as well financial) focus should be to generate income from Natura 2000. This offers a chance to heal the wounds of the Natura 2000 designation process and to (re-)gain acceptance for Natura 2000 through a participatory and integrated approach.

9. **Extension services, qualifications and networking** are central instruments for effective learning and adaptation processes. They need to be developed beyond their current focus on agricultural sector and on agricultural production questions and strengthened in sectors where there is strong public interest (i.e. to include nature protection, participation of civil society). The national rural network will have an important role in organising, guiding and supporting this learning process.
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Rural Development Programmes


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Entwicklungsplan für den ländlichen Raum im Land Brandenburg, Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umweltschutz und Raumordnung des Landes Brandenburg. Konsolidierte Fassung 2002

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Mid Term Evaluations


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Halbzeitbewertung des Plans zur Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums gemäß VO (EG) Nr. 1257/1999 des Landes Brandenburg. ZALF, Humboldt-Universität Berlin und IfLS. 2003


