



REFORMING THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE POLICY

TOWARDS GREENER AND MORE PARTICIPATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The development of Central European landscapes, the state of the environment and living conditions in rural areas largely depends on the EU Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). At present, the process of reforming the CAP after 2013 is underway. On 18 November 2010, the European Commission presented a communication on “The CAP towards 2020”, which outlines options for the future CAP and initiates the debate with other institutions and stakeholders. This draft proposes a greener CAP and highlights the importance of bottom-up approaches like LEADER. The presentation of legislative proposals is scheduled for 2011.

At present, no one can predict in any detail how the CAP will look after 2013 once the consultation and discussion process among the Member States, interest groups and many other stakeholders has been completed. In addition, powerful lobbyists are working in the background to secure their part of the EU cake. At this stage, it is nevertheless still important not only to follow current discussions but also to engage in debate on different levels and across all CE regions. For this reason, this newsletter focuses on the current reform of the CAP.

In the meantime, the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project has made significant progress and produced several items of output of public interest:

- The evaluation of similar projects to identify factors that contribute to the success or failure of projects with a view to identifying best practices.
- A new approach developed by PP4 makes it possible to screen local and regional development plans to easily assess the role of landscape and public participation.
- The screening of national and regional policies governing landscape planning and landscape development revealed large differences between the CE countries and regions.

In this and future newsletters, we will inform you of the output of our activities. On page 4, we present a profile of our Austrian partner (PP3), the University of Applied Life Sciences in Vienna. In addition, you will find information about upcoming activities and interesting events related to our topic. For further information, please also visit our website www.vital-landscapes.eu or contact us directly.

Jörn Freyer & Burkhardt Kolbmüller (coordinators)



THE COMMON AGRICULTURE POLICY TOWARDS 2020

THE ACTUAL DEBATE AND THE POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON LANDSCAPE

In November 2010, the European Commission published the key issues and overall goals of the CAP reform post 2013 (<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/>). Some topics such as competitiveness and food security are probably of lesser importance for landscape and rural development. However, the paper formulates development perspectives that will substantially influence how Central European landscapes will develop – and that sounds very similar to the objectives of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project.

In general, the target of the Commission is to achieve greener agriculture and more balanced rural development. The paper highlights the aim of “sustainable growth by ensuring sustainable land management, providing environmental public goods, addressing biodiversity loss, promoting renewable energies, fostering animal and plant health, (...) further reducing emissions, enhancing carbon stocks and fully developing the potential of rural areas.”

Since “agriculture and forestry play a key role in producing public goods, notably environmental such as landscapes, farmland biodiversity, climate stability and greater resilience to natural disasters”, the Commission proposes “a greener and more equitably distributed first pillar” of the CAP post 2013. That is good news with regard to the sustainable development of diverse and well-kept landscapes in Central Europe!



Another topic of current debate is the future of the LEADER programme. Taking into account points raised in the critical review by the European Audit Court in autumn 2010, the Commission proposes to continue to qualify and strengthen the LEADER approach. With more professional financial management, the LEADER Action Groups (LAG) will independently implement regional development strategies and concrete projects, based on a bottom-up approach involving different regional stakeholders and key actors. LEADER is regarded as a key instrument of rural development.

What happens next? At present, a broad public debate about the Commission's proposals is underway (see www.arc2020.eu). Since the CAP involves a large amount of public money, powerful interests and lobbyists are trying to influence the discussion process. Nevertheless, it seems that maintaining the landscape, sustainable rural development, and the strengthening of participation will be important aspects of the CAP post 2013.

For this reason, it is important to participate in the current debate at different levels and to “lobby” for landscape and vital rural areas – in keeping with our key message **We are all part of our landscapes and its development - vitalize your landscape!**



FACTORS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

AN EVALUATION OF RECENT PROJECTS IN LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT



As part of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project an evaluation of 15 past projects in landscape and regional development from all partner regions was undertaken to identify factors contributing to the success and failure of such initiatives. The evaluation will be used to compare successful approaches with a view to collating best practice examples.

On 17 March 2011, the WP3 joint work group met in Bratislava/Slovakia to discuss the evaluated projects. Led by the responsible partner PP3 and using the innovative interactive GIVE method, the work group identified the following factors for the success and failure of initiatives:

a) In general, the **involvement of local people and the strengthening of civil society** is a precondition for developing sustainable perspectives for regional development. For more than short-lived success, a **long-term strategic organized network** is essential along with **good regional PR** aimed at local people and regional stakeholders.

b) The **consideration of social issues and culture can significantly strengthen local and regional identity**, e.g. by (re-)discovering cultural-historical features of the region.

c) In terms of economic issues, one precondition for success is the importance of **activities based on regional resources, using existing local skills and that strengthen regional economic cycles**. Good projects also support the **economic use** of cultural landscapes (i.e. not solely focussed on protection) and establish new economic activities that make use of **local skills**.

d) With regard to environment and nature the key is to **open the eyes of local people and decision makers to the value of “their” historic cultural landscapes**. Furthermore, it is important to

make nature and environment a development issue as an opportunity to change the quality of life for local communities and for new (economic) development approaches.

During the evaluation process, a variety of proposals for improving projects in landscape and regional development were elaborated. Of these the following are most important:

- Involve the intra-sectoral perspective in regional (landscape) development
- Introduce regional budgets (to be managed by regional networks)
- Involve and convince local, regional and national administration
- Identify local/regional traditional sources and stress the importance of local trademarks
- Promote and support regional small actors (=decentralised approaches)
- Find better communication channels for reaching target groups and local people
- Better integration of project results into spatial planning
- Integrate local NGOs in project work – encourage local people to become active
- Better involvement of young people
- Try to understand the perceptions of local people (i.e. not mediated by scientists).

Detailed results of the project evaluation are available online at www.vital-landscapes.eu.



Sandor Jombach: Buzsák, Nagyberék/HU (PP6 pilot area)

PROJECT NEWS

HALFTIME CONFERENCE

The Project Halftime Conference will be held on 22-23 September 2011 in Ljubljana / Slovenia. The conference will present the first results of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project as well as related approaches.

VISUALISATION WORKSHOP

A workshop concerning the practical applications of landscape visualisation will take place in Magdeburg / DE on 25 May. The workshop is aimed primarily at people engaged in practical activities in landscape and regional planning.

NEW OUTPUTS AVAILABLE

One year after the start of the project, the first outcomes are available:

- Factors that contribute to the success and failure of projects
- A new approach to screening regional development plans to assess the role of landscape and public participation
- Results of the screening of national and regional policies.

All outputs are available online from the "download" section of the project homepage

www.vital-landscapes.eu

PP3: UNIVERSITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND LIFE SCIENCES VIENNA

EXPERTS IN PARTICIPATION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Cultural Heritage Association Saxony-Anhalt: Partnerworkshop in Vienna

The Austrian VITAL LANDSCAPES partner is the Institute of Spatial Planning and Rural Development (IRUB) at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna. The Institute undertakes teaching and research, produces publications and hosts conferences as well as providing scientific policy advice on a wide variety of topics relevant to issues covered by the VITAL LANDSCAPES project:

- Sustainable rural development including the implementation of Agenda 21 and related processes at a local and regional level and adult education (summer schools) for actors and professionals in rural development
- Public participation in community development processes
- Sustainable urban design codes for energy- and resource-efficient settlement structures
- The role of spatial planning for soil and landscape conservation, development and energy planning
- Strategic environmental assessment in Austria
- Implementation strategies for the European Landscape Convention

- Regional energy supply scenarios
- Demographic change in rural areas and their implication for public infrastructure.

In the framework of VITAL LANDSCAPES, PP3 is mainly responsible for the implementation of WP3 (Innovative Participation and Visualisation Techniques), with special focus on a case study analysis of how to bridge landscape development with participation processes (like Agenda 21) involving values, visions and different topics of regional, local and communal development, and the elaboration of landscape quality objectives.

Furthermore, PP3 will implement a pilot project in the Mühlviertel region focussing on a regional Agenda 21 process to develop landscape scenarios taking into account the visions and values of the local inhabitants.

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