

European Case Studies on Private Land Conservation

Report



ENPLC

European Networks for
Private Land Conservation





Scan me

European Case studies on private land conservation tools

Final version: January 2024

Author: Mathias Brummer (XCN)

Note: this report has received the support of all project partners of LIFE ENPLC project.

Recommended citation: Brummer, M. (2024). Case studies on private land conservation tools. ENPLC Project.

Aim

The aim of this document is to showcase case studies on private land conservation tools across different European countries. In this sense this document complements the report *State of the art and the potential for further development of conservation agreements as private land conservation tools*.

The ENPLC project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under grant agreement LIFE19 PRE/NL/000003

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Index

1. Case studies on conservation leases.....	3
Germany - Fairpachten.....	3
France - Diversity of cases.....	5
Spain - Boada lagoon restoration.....	6
Czech Republic - Opolonec Nature Reserve.....	8
2. Case studies on conservation easements.....	9
Estonia - Woodland Key Habitats.....	9
Spain - The Sorral estate.....	11
France - Virac Tarn, Occitanie.....	13
3. Case studies on land stewardship contracts.....	14
France – Allonzier-la-Caille.....	14
Italy 1 - Management of green infrastructures.....	16
Italy 2 Management of The Maccarese Oasis.....	18
Lavia - The LIFE WoodMeadowLIFE project.....	19
Spain - la Gutina.....	21
4. Case studies on privately protected areas.....	23
Italy - The Pratesi Estate, an initiative by WWF Oasis.....	23
Latvia - Micro-reserves.....	25
Spain - Cañada de los Pájaros.....	27
5. Case studies on result based agri-environmental schemes.....	29
Germany - Arbeitsgemeinschaft Biologischer Umweltschutz im Kreis Soest.....	29
Spain - Serra do Xistral.....	31
Result Based Agri-Environmental payment scheme in France.....	33
Latvia - Latvian initiative for Result Based Agri-Environmental Payment Schemes.....	34
Romania - High Natural Value farmland landscapes.....	36
6. Case studies on temporary nature.....	37
Belgium - Signify' factory in Turnhout.....	37
Germany - Advance on the Temporary Nature concept.....	39
7. Links to additional case studies.....	40

1. Case studies on conservation leases

Germany - Fairpachten

Fairpachten is a project implemented by [NABU National Natural Heritage Foundation](#). Through Fairpachten NABU provides recommendations to private landowners on integrating conservation aspects in lease contracts with farmers, for the implementation of nature-friendly management of meadows, pastures and arable fields. The project is of great interest as biodiversity in the agricultural landscape is under massive threat. The population of many species depending on traditional agricultural land uses has declined sharply in recent decades. Between the principal causes of it are the fragmentation and increasing sealing of the landscape, the loss of landscape elements, and the intensification of agriculture with corresponding increases in the use of fertiliser and pesticides.



Figure 1. Flower meadow. Source: © Frank Gottwald

Fairpachten provides a modular system of text elements for various conservation measures that can be integrated in lease agreements. In addition to that, a team of consultants helps landowners choose the best conservation measures suitable for their land.

Using lease contracts for conservation is a form of private land conservation where the lessors (private landowners, churches, municipalities and regional authorities or foundations and companies) lease their land to leaseholders for conservation management. The lessors and the tenants agree on the mutual rights and obligations (such as the amount and payment date of the lease) as well as the general conditions for exercising management (e.g., from when and for how long the lease should apply). During this process, landowners can also agree on additional measures for the management of their land regarding the special protection of nature and the environment as part of the contract negotiations. The lease contracts can be from verbal to written, but it is recommended to always have a written form.

Fairpachten provides a template of the lease contract and free advice and information service for everyone who wants to protect or restore nature on arable land, meadows and pastures in cooperation with farmers. In practice, that means that NABU advises landowners based on the local conditions and explains what measures are suitable for the property, based on a range of conservation objectives such as field birds, hares, insects or wild herbs. Measures also contribute to the protection of soil and water. All nature conservation measures promoted by Fairpachten benefit biodiversity in the cultural landscape, e.g., nature-friendly management without pesticides or the creation of field margins with wildflowers. Where possible, Fairpachten also indicates if there are funding opportunities for selected measures. On this basis, landowners can agree on measures for more biodiversity with their tenants.



The Fair Leases project is funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation within the Federal [Biological Diversity](#) Programme with funds from the [Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection](#).

France - Diversity of cases

Different type of lease can be signed between landowners and a land stewardship organisation or between a land stewardship organization and a farmer. Indeed, a landowner can entrust the management of his land to an organization with the signature of a Emphyteutic lease, this contract is a notarial deed, gives land management to the organization and gives real right on the property. For example, in Ain department, the city of Samognat has signed an emphyteutic lease for 30 years with the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels Rhône-Alpes for conservation and enhancement of the natural environment thus the Conservatoire owns real right on the property and has a fee to pay every year to the landowner.

In Saint-Maurice-ès-Allier (Puy-de-Dôme department), a landowner signed another type of lease, a civil lease with the Conservatoire des Espaces et Paysages d'Auvergne in order to protect remarkable natural heritage of the land (2ha). The site corresponds in particular to the emergence of two mineral water sources, allowing the development of a maritime flora remarkable at regional and European level. The Conservatoire is committed to the ecological management of these highly sensitive natural areas, for example, vegetation control, vegetation monitoring, maintenance of the area, public discovery tour creation. For his part, the landowner is committed to respect the entirety of the site. The lease runs for 5 years.

Finally, another type of lease is available, the Rural lease with or without environmental clauses. Regarding the Rural lease with environmental clauses (BRE), it is for farm land, for a duration of at least 9 years and a list of 16 environmental clauses can be added to the lease. These clauses are about farming practices to respect or practices restriction. The BRE allows a farming practices monitoring, indeed the farmer may have to record his practices in a notebook. As a rural lease, the BRE is subject to tenant status. In Puy Saint-Jean (Puy-de-Dôme, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes), the Conservatoire d'espaces naturels (CEN) d'Auvergne have signed a BRE with a couple of farmers for 25 years in order to ensure sustainable management of a part of a communal land (about 1ha) while respecting the ecological and landscape value of the site (the CEN has signed an emphyteutic lease with the municipality who owns the land). The farm management is the cultivation of a biodynamic vineyard while maintaining this vineyard trough mixed sheep/donkey grazing. This management is experimental and original and it's aim to prove that it is possible to produce wine of quality while preserving soil and existing vegetation. As the plot concerned is within a Natura 2000 area, some agricultural practices must respect a number of general environmental recommendations. Consequently, environmental clauses have been included in the rural lease such as no grassland turning, no fertiliser use, ban of phytosanitary products use, follow the specifications of biodynamic agriculture, maintenance of fruit trees, ... Control and monitoring of the environmental specifications is based notably on bio-indicators (plant species: *Ononis spinosa*, *Orchis purpurea*, ...) and record of agricultural practices. As a rural lease, a rent must be paid. Here, it is set at 10 € per year for a total of 250 €.

Another type of lease exists, it is the Multiannual pasture or farming agreement. It is a particular form of lease which does not confer continuous or exclusive use of the land for the lessee. This type of agreement leaves the owner free to use the leased land for non-agricultural purposes under certain conditions.

Spain - Boada lagoon restoration



Figure 2. Birds in the Boada lagoon. Source: Fundación Global Nature

Fundación Global Nature is implementing a project to restore the Boada lagoon in the municipality of Boada de Campos (Palencia, Castilla y León). The Boada lagoon was drained in 1968 coinciding with the land concentration process in the region. Consequently, its original surface area of approximately 90 ha was used to increase the cereal and pulses of the municipality of Boada de Campos. However, the former lagoon proved to be an area of poor agricultural quality due water drainage and soil salinity, yet this situation lasted for 30 years. In 1998, Fundación Global Nature started the progressive restoration of

the ecosystems of the Boada Lagoon. Today, Fundación Global Nature is responsible for its management together with the Boada de Campos Council, and many public and private organisations have financed and collaborated in the restoration actions.

The first restoration actions undertaken were, to recover the water supply from the main stream to the lagoon and the establishment of agreements with the town council and private landowners; subsequently, three fundamental actions were undertaken for the restoration of the lagoon: improvement of the water quality, the purchase of perilagunar agricultural plots and compensation payments for the loss of natural runoff, with an extra artificial supply of water from the Canal de Castilla. The conservation lease thus arises from the fact



Figure 3. Boda lagoon, air view. Source: Fundación Global Nature

that Fundación Global Nature purchases agricultural plots on the perimeter of the lagoon, the basin of which is owned by the municipalities, and leases these plots every year to the municipalities of Boada and Pedraza to guarantee their flooding. Between other smaller activities in the area Fundación Global Nature is implementing action for the maintenance of the nesting island; as well as improvements and maintenance of the facilities for public and tourist use like an interpretative route, panels, bird observatory, the management of a House-Museum and nesting boxes for birds of prey and bat shelters, to mention just a few. That way, together with other actions, many of the natural values have been restored, but full restoration will only be completed when the entire catchment area has been restored and all disturbances are gone.

To evaluate the results of the actions implemented, these are monitored. Examples of monitoring activities are, the censuses of water birds, the monitoring of flora and habitats of community interest, the evaluation of water quality, the involvement of research centres and their projects, and the valuation of ecosystem services by the local population.

Thanks to the restoration work carried out, the Boada lagoon has increased the biodiversity of the territory through communities of aquatic flora and fauna, the presence of several habitats of

community interest, and threatened or rare species which makes it a place of reference for the conservation of its biodiversity. In addition, it has become a reference as a bird-watching site, giving value to a depopulated rural area which, through this activity, helps to consolidate the area as a tourist attraction together with other cultural values of the region of Tierra de Campos. Today, the Boada lagoon together with the La Nava and Pedraza lagoons in Palencia are the second most important complex of wetlands in Castilla y León.

Czech Republic - Opolonec Nature Reserve



Figure 4. Elm in the stewarded land. Source: ZO ČSOP Šumava

The site Opolonec is a nature reserve (přírodní rezervace, PR) and Special Area of Conservation (EVL) in the Prachatice region of the Czech Republic. Within this reserve crystalline limestone associations as well as species-rich forests are found. On the limestone meadows grow with rare species of dwarf gentian. The management authority of the nature reserve is the regional authority (krajský úřad). The authority previously outsourced the mowing of meadows to other entities, but the management wasn't provided properly for some time. This had negative effects on the dwarf gentians, which require of well-set up dates for mowing and other management practices. Recently, the regional authority decided to hand over the management of the meadows to the local chapter of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation "ZO ČSOP Šumava".

For the ZO ČSOP Šumava, the next step was to sign agreements with the owners of the land located in the site. When the chapter had agreements with the owners, the regional authority could start financing the management (mowing) on the meadows.

The local chapter and the owner agreed to establish a loan agreement (nájem, nájemní smlouva). The principles of the contract establish that its purpose is to protect and maintain an important natural reserve with rare species of dwarf gentiana. Under the loan agreement, members of the chapter could manage the site and the regional authority finances the management work based on the agreements. The agreement specifies the management practices that should be done in the site: scarification, mowing, sheep grazing. With that purpose in mind, a loan was agreed at the amount of CZK 200 per year for an indefinite time period. However, the right of the lease can be ended by agreement. Also, the lessor has the right to end the contract if the lessee violates any obligation specified in the contract or if the lessee finds himself in arrears with the payment of rent. Finally, the lessee agrees to avoid any activity that would interfere with the use of neighbouring land. Any modifications may only be made with the prior consent of the lessor and on the basis of permission from the regional authority.



Figure 5. Photo of Gentianella. Source: J. Hromas

2. Case studies on conservation easements

Estonia - Woodland Key Habitats

In Estonia, the protection of woodland key habitats (WKH)¹ can be regarded as a form of conservation easement. A WKH is an area where there is a high probability of the occurrence of narrowly adapted, endangered, or rare species. They are areas outside a nature protection area. This mechanism which started in the early 90s currently includes 286 contracts signed with private forest owners, all over Estonia. The WKH contracts cover about 682 ha in 363 different WKH areas, and the average size of WKH is 1,9 ha. The WKH give opportunities to some species with specific habitat requirements to survive in cases where the surrounding habitats are degraded. WKH areas also are important steppingstones for different species between areas.

To protect such an area, a private forest owner can enter into an agreement with the Private Forest Centre, which compensates for damages and costs caused by restrictions on forest use (§ 23 of the Forest Act). The protection of a WKH in a privately owned forest is voluntary. If the forest owner wants to protect valuable forest plots with a contract, the owner can first apply to the Environmental Board.

Then a specialist of the Environmental Board checks the existence of the WKH in the forest, adjusts its boundaries, if necessary, and prepares an accurate price calculation. The state Forest Management Centre's timber sales statistics and felling cost data are then used as the source information when determining the price, and forest assessment data are used to determine the liquid timber quantity.

If a private forest owner wishes to enter into an agreement for the protection of a WKH, the owner shall confirm it by signing that the information specified in the act prepared by the Environmental Board is correct and that he or she agrees to share the information with the Private Forest Centre and a notary. After that, the Private Forest Centre organizes the conclusion of a notarial contract, which encumbers the forest with a personal right of use for the benefit of the state for 20 years. The contract of the WKH will be registered to the land register. The fees involved in concluding the contract are paid by the Private Forest Centre.

The Environmental Board will control the preservation of WKH during the contract and the compensation for the loss of the income is paid by the Private Forest Centre to the owner in annual equal payments.

Under the agreement, the owner of the estate accepts the obligation to prevent and not allow in the area of WKH: forest management (except for emergency felling with the consent of the Environmental Board), removal of dead wood, forest drainage, construction of forest roads, reforestation, as well as camping and campfires. In case of breach of contract, a contractual penalty of up to 10% of the total value of the contract can be demanded from the owner.

If the ownership of a WKH changes, all the rights and obligations of the existing owner related to the protection of the WKH shall be transferred to the new owner. The new owner does not have the right to terminate the WKH agreement prematurely for one year.

¹ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/507062022001/consolide>

If the owner terminates the contract before the term expires, he/she must return the amount of compensation received so far under the contract and pay a contractual penalty of 20% of the total amount of the contract.

Spain - The Sorral estate



Figure 6. El Sorral estate. Source: The Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Rivers (CERM-UVic-UCC)

The Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Rivers (CERM-UVic-UCC), the environmental area of the Ter River Museum which at the same time is, since 2016, a university research centre, is dedicated to the research, dissemination and conservation of rivers and other inland aquatic environments.

In 2013 the CERM signed what could be conceptually the Spanish equivalent to conservation easements with the estate of el Sorral of 7 ha. The estate has a total surface of 26,7 Ha and is located on the right bank of the River Ter in the municipality of les Masies del Voltregà (Osona region, Catalonia, Spain). The

contract includes one of the few island in the Ter river and several river branches and temporary pools. The island called el Sorral was formerly used as a poplar plantation. The CERM initially had established a land stewardship contract with the property in 2010, and in 2013 signed the Spanish equivalent to conservation easements to protect these 7 ha for a duration of 30 years (renewable). At its time this contract was one of the first of its kind signed in Catalonia. This contract allowed the restoration of the natural habitat. Between the actions that have been undertaken in the property are the improvement of the structure of the willow grove, the elimination of poplar, the control of invasive species and the recovery of several native species and, in 2022, associated to the Life Alnus project, the removal of a weir that divided the island into two parts. The CERM has been carrying out regular environmental monitoring and, at the same time, carries out activities with university students and numerous environmental education workshops. The CERM is also working together with the Catalan administration on the inclusion of this property in an area called "Meandres del Ter", which includes other states with land stewardship agreements signed with the CERM; this will be part of the Natura 2000 Network in 2023. The owner of the estate signed the contract as they believe in the importance to preserve and restore the environmental values of the territory they live in. The signature of the agreement was also feasible because a climate of trust between the CERM and the owners was established.



Figure 7. El Sorral estate. Source: The Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Rivers (CERM-UVic-UCC)

The negotiation of the partial use right in rem, the signature in front of the notary and the inscription in the land register was possible through the project «[Nuevas herramientas para la calidad y la efectividad de la custodia del territorio](#)» in collaboration with the *Fundación Biodiversidad*. Furthermore actions to restore the habitat were implemented through the project «[Riberes del Ter](#)»

which aimed to develop land stewardship contracts and stewardship actions along the Ter river, complemented by other projects, such as the Life Alnus project. An explanatory vide of the project can be found [here](#).

France - Virac Tarn, Occitanie

Inspired by tools found in several Anglo-Saxon countries (notably "conservation easements"), the French government has created in 2016 on reconquest of the biodiversity law a new contractual tool called Obligations réelles environnementales (ORE). Under this tool a landowner can sign a contract with a legal person under public law or private law with the aim to protect nature. ORE gives rise to an obligations on the landowner's side to maintain, preserve, manage or restore biodiversity or ecological functions. Obligations are linked to the land and not to the landowner, hence commitments persist when the landowner changes. The signature of ORE implies notary fees and, sometimes, a very long processing time. In Virac, (Tarn, Occitanie), a landowner concerned about the conservation of his agricultural land (18 ha) and without descendants he signed an ORE with the departmental federation of hunters (FDC) of Tarn for 99 years to ensure the sustainable and good management of his land. This ORE contains a number of obligations designed to restore, maintain, preserve, communicate and manage biodiversity and the ecological functions of the farm, such as the ban of phytopharmaceutical products, or to use and apply management recommendations established by the FDC in the monitoring and management sheet that has been created for each structure associated to biodiversity to be preserved (hedges, orchards, isolated trees, moorland, dry grassland, ponds, wet meadows, ...). A financial incentive in the shape of a tax exemption of the communal part of the property tax on non-built properties is linked to the ORE, but most of the time landowners don't request it because they are not aware of it, or because it is not attractive enough.

3. Case studies on land stewardship contracts

France – Allonzier-la-Caille

In Allonzier-la-Caille (Haute-Savoie, France) the association Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels (CEN) de Haute-Savoie along with landowners established a land stewardship agreement (Civil Code Art. 1101 et 1134) to protect the "Etang" wetland of 3223 m² for a period of 10 years. The abandonment of farming practices and the consequent scrub encroachment is threatening this habitat with extinction, whereas the Etang wetland plays an important hydrological role and harbours a high biodiversity. Consequently, the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Haute-Savoie will implement restoration and maintenance actions of the wetland to ensure its persistence and its functionality. Besides the restoration actions and monitoring, on the wetland, drainage is banned and leisure activities that could harm the environment are prohibited. Despite these restrictions, the landowners retain the use rights of the land such as hunting rights, wood harvesting, etc. Benefits of this mechanism is its flexibility and its compatibility with other uses such as rural lease or hunting leases. However, the mechanism has a lower legal certainty.

Within the land stewardship tools also the "loans for use" (Civil code art. 1875 à 1878) do exist in France. This mechanism is a contract established between landowners/farmers and a legal person under public or private law (land stewardship organization). So, for example, this mechanism could be to establish a contract through which CEN that owns a piece of land provides this land to a farmer under the specification of specific environmental criteria. The benefits of this mechanism for the landowners are that they do not have to pay for the land and its flexibility, and for the nature conservation NGO the advantage is the possibility to impose strict conditions on the management of the land. On the other hand, downsides are its fragility and rather short-term perspective. A concrete example of this mechanism is the contract established between CEN- Haute-Savoie, owner of 27473 m² of wetland, and a farmer in Le Reposoir (Haute-Savoie). The contract, which lasts until 2024, and it aims to sustain and adapt agricultural practices to preserve the ecological quality of the wetland and ensure a management and exploitation which is compatible with the sustainability of the Great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) and therefore populations of the butterfly *Maculinea*. The importance of the protection of this wetland is confirmed by the presence of two patrimonial species of butterflies, The Dusky large blue (*Phengaris nausithous*) and the Scarce large blue (*Phengaris teleius*). These are protected species on IUCN red list and on the Habitat Directive. The two species coexist obligatorily with the Great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) that feeds the caterpillars and ants that then raise and feed the caterpillars during the winter. It is also home to two priority habitats of community interest and two habitats of community interest. The management practices that the farmer has to follow are between others to respect mowing dates, the maintenance of refugee areas located in different regions each year, extensive cattle grazing on hay meadows or the ban of fertilizers on wetland and a buffer zone, the ban to modify soils physico-chemical composition.

A similar mechanism is the "agri-environmental partnership agreement" which is equivalent to the above contract, except that it is clearer that the objective of the contract is not the provision of agricultural land, but a "win-win" partnership between the landowner/land stewardship

organization and a farmer, besides, annual financial compensation can be paid by the lender to the farmer.

Another type of contract is the Agreement to join the network of a technical assistance unit. This agreement commits the owner to maintain the ecological qualities of his land in return for free advice from the technical assistance unit but also for example, the technical assistance undertakes to carry out a diagnosis of the site and provide a management document of the site for the landowner. This contract of adhesion is a short-term contract and is not referring to any legal contractual scheme.

Italy 1 - Management of green infrastructures



Figure 8. Aetani farm, creation of a wetland with planting of trees to shape the riparian vegetation - Action C.5. Source: Giovanni Mastrobuoni

The LIFE Greenchange project develops several pilot interventions aiming to restore and enhance segments of the riparian strips along the ditch network and part of the windbreakers system of the Pontine Plain to improve the biodiversity of the area. Such system of ditches and windbreaks was created following the integral reclamation of the plain when 4,000,000 trees are "planted" to protect 480 km of fields and cultivated land and still strongly characterizes the local landscape. Different land stewardship contracts which last between 2019 and 2029 regulate each

intervention involving 4 private farms and the Province of Latina. Within the agreements, each farm accepts to manage according to shared rules the green infrastructure/ecological corridor financed by the LIFE project and realized as demonstrative intervention partly on farm's property and partly on public property. Windbreaks and riparian strips are in fact owned by the Regional Authority, and the Province previously obtained the authorization to the works during a formal meeting (a procedure called "Conferenza dei Servizi"). The final objective is to demonstrate that it is feasible to realize and maintain, within a productive farm, ecological connections and steppingstones.

The actions implemented consist of: I) The removal and maintenance by cutting and pruning of dry, damaged, unstable eucalyptus plants (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with replacement, by planting, of the eliminated plants with native species (**partial re-naturalization**); II) The restoration and re-naturalization of the functionality of the windbreak strips by planting native shrub and tree species in the voids and in the interruptions of the strips; and III) The planting of new linear tree strips within farms in order to generate ecological corridors. In parallel



Figure 9. Epitaffio ditch after the intervention of reshaping of the hydraulic left bank - Action C.5. Source: Giovanni Mastrobuoni

farmers commit to respect the following management practices: I) Calibrated and sustainable management aimed at the conservation of the autochthonous tree, shrub and herbaceous essences that constitute the linear and areal plant formation object of the intervention; II) Favoring the natural evolution of the linear and areal formations of vegetation towards complex and diversified natural structures; III) Conservation and protection of mature trees of native species, even if dead, dying or perishing; Cutting of only allochthonous tree species and according to modalities, timing and methodologies agreed with the Province of Latina; IV) or not to use of herbicides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers and livestock waste within the linear and areal plant formations and in the

perimeter areas, for a distance of at least 20 m, between other activities. Quarterly monitoring of the fauna and flora was scheduled to verify the evolution of the site and of the species in order to allow the Province of Latina to estimate the effects of the intervention and report to the Life Program managing authority.

For more information about the LIFE Greenchange please refer to project web site and social media accounts:

<https://lifegreenchange.eu/it/>

<https://www.instagram.com/lifegreenchange.eu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LIFE-Greenchange-435288447267522/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-SIAWHo0tXlsG2Pk_sLBrA

Italy 2 Management of The Maccarese Oasis



Figure 10. Maccarese Oasis. Source: F. Marcone

The land stewardship initiative takes place in an area close to Rome within the Roman Coastal Reserve. The Maccarese company, who is the landowner of this property of approximately 353 hectares, has agreed to transfer the management of his property to WWF Italy for more than 35 years to enhance its environmental values. The land stewardship contract was renewed in 2022 for a duration of 5 more years.

Before the collaboration started, the areas was degraded and at risk of land development and fire risk. Thanks to the management of WWF, the areas were managed and recognized as protected areas (Natura 2000 site and State Reserve) and monitoring and surveillance is regularly carried out. Due to this collaboration now the property has a high naturalistic value and image with a distinctive character. Within the property the distinctive flora includes dune pioneer plants. On the top of the dune and in the back dune area there are common Junipers, phoenician juniper, rosemary, mastic tree, myrtle and laurel. The woodland is composed of holm oak, oaks and, in the wetter areas, alders and various species of poplars. There are also various species of wild orchids. The aquatic avifauna is very rich, including mallard, teal cormorant, grey heron, egret, little bittern and purple heron. Among the birds of prey, the marsh harrier, kestrel, osprey and buzzard have been observed. Mammals include porcupines, wild rabbits, foxes, stone martens and rice field mouse. In the scrubland, numerous individuals of the common tortoise, the symbol of the property.



Figure 11. Maccarese Oasis. Source: F. Marcone

Between the property there is also a wetland which in the 70s was used for intensive fishing and after its abandonment and restoration has been transformed into an eutrophic biotope that now harbors important wetland bird species. The initiatives and actions developed are aimed primarily at involving local citizenship, but also visitors who are not resident in the municipal area, starting with school children and their families. In fact, their management turns out to be an operational tool that responds to the founding objectives of the Roman Littoral State Reserve.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFa3M4sg8gs>

https://elcn.eu/sites/default/files/2022-04/220222_manuale_ELCN_v8_low.pdf

Lavia - The LIFE WoodMeadowLIFE project



Figure 12. Landowner and his grassland_photo by Anrijs Pozarskis

In Estonia and Latvia under the Life project WoodMedow (LIFE20NAT/EE/074) on private lands restoration of Fennoscandian wooded meadows (EU priority habitat 6530*) are done in 33 Natura 2000 sites between 2021 and 2026. The Fennoscandian wooded meadows are an especially endangered and rare habitat, that largely depends on human activity (grazing or mowing) to exist. Due to the changes in the agricultural practices, many wooded meadows were abandoned or destroyed by ploughing or forestry. It is a highly endangered habitat that is in an

unfavourable conservation status (U2) throughout its range. The wooded meadows have developed in the conditions of traditional agriculture with a very diverse approaches for management, that included sustainable use of timber, collecting branches and hay for winter fodder, providing pastures and using the area for beekeeping, collecting berries and hazelnuts and other uses. The diversity of management approaches provided for an extraordinary species richness - the wooded meadows are the most diverse habitats in the Boreal region and can host up to 50 species per square meter. The main threat to the wooded meadows is the same that all seminatural habitats are facing nowadays - abandonment or inappropriate management. Wooded meadows are a unique example of heritage landscapes that are very labour-and cost-intensive to maintain, but hold an enormous socio-economic value, in terms of ecosystem services and ecological functions. Estonia and Latvia together host 60% of all remaining wooded meadows in the Boreal Biogeographic region, with Estonia hosting 42% (2000-4000 ha, average 3000 ha) and Latvia 18% (1075-1400 ha, average 1240 ha).



Figure 13. Habitat 6530 on Marsi farm in Latvia-Source: Kristaps Kalns_GrassLIFE

However, in 2019, only around 830 hectares i.e 28% of Estonian wooded meadows and 380 ha (31%, 2015 data from the Habitat Managment Plan) of Latvian wooded meadows were managed. Unmanaged sites have been heavily overgrown with shrubs and trees and more efforts are needed to stop the overall degradation of the wooded meadows in Estonia and Latvia and to reach the aims for favourable conservation status (i.e. managing at least 3300 ha of Estonian wooded meadows by 2020, as set in the Estonian Nature Conservation Development plan, or 80% of Latvian wooded meadows, as set in the Latvian PAF). Therefore, all possible efforts need to be taken to maintain or restore them.

The restoration works are performed and funded by the Estonian Environmental Board in Estonia and by Latvian Fund for Nature in Latvia, but the sites that are selected for restoration depend on the voluntary interest of landowner to cooperate in the restoration and maintenance of the restored site. As the restoration sites are located on private lands, land stewardship agreements and detailed planning with the landowners is a crucial pre-condition to start the restoration. For part of the restoration areas, the landowner consent has been obtained already prior to for restoration, while for the remaining areas, an open and inclusive landowner engagement approach will be applied - best locations will be selected based on an open call for landowners. After obtaining the landowner consent, and investing project money in restoration of the areas, the landowner is obliged to ensure the maintenance of restored areas for at least 20 years.

Spain - la Gutina



Figure 14. Temporary ponds at Mass la Gutina. Source: laeden - Institució Alt Empordanesa per a la Defensa i Estudi de la Natura

The temporary ponds are within the estate of «la Gutina» at the Albera Mountain (municipality of Sant Climent Sescebes, Girona, Spain). In this typically Mediterranean ecosystem, there are a total of four temporary ponds. These ponds are characterised by a high floristic and faunistic diversity. Their characteristics and species composition make it a fragile and threatened ecosystem according to EU legislation. The estate is within the Natura 2000 habitat directive and includes a natural site of community importance. Before 2015, in the property there were only two temporary ponds and a large part of the natural heritage, and the species of the ponds

weren't present. The third pond called, «Prat dels Rosers» was drained in the twentieth century and through an irrigation channel drained water to nearby vineyards of the property. Hence, the Prat dels Rosers Pond was dried out and underwent a process of scrub encroachment and afforestation.

The recovery of the Prat de les Roses Pond is a success story for the stewardship organisation laeden - Institució Alt Empordanesa per a la Defensa i Estudi de la Natura. Within the agricultural stewardship program of IADEN, the objectives are to preserve the natural heritage of agricultural plots. Under that umbrella, in 2011 IADEN signed a stewardship contract with the property used for ecological wine production. The initial objective of the stewardship contract was to preserve the two initial ponds and its natural values. Landowners were eager to sign the stewardship contract as otherwise it would have been difficult to maintain and restore the habitats within their property. After conversations with the owners, it was realised that a third pond existed. Hence between 2014 and 2015 a project was initiated to restore the third pond with the support of the landowners. The project had a total budget of 9.300 euros and was financed by Fundació Adrena and was implemented by IADEN with the collaboration of the Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVic-UCC), the companies Geoservei and Foresterra and the support of the landowners.



Figure 15. Temporary ponds at Mass la Gutina. Source: laeden - Institució Alt Empordanesa per a la Defensa i Estudi de la Natura

Actions undertaken consisted of hydrogeological studies to analyse the pond and restore it to avoid drainage to nearby vineyards in which also volunteers collaborated. The project allowed to identify a fourth pond in which similar actions were undertaken. Restoration activities of these two ponds increased the surface of rare habitats and contributes to the viability of the metapopulations of the

ponds. The study of the seed bank and the floristic composition allowed to determine species which are associated with these temporary habitats. Hence the project offered a win-win solution for the landowners as the drained water to nearby vineyards was of problem for their production, and IAEDEN was able to recover a habitat of community interest while the stewardship actions were compatible with the productivity of the property. In fact, the landowners have a high environmental consciousness as they don't use pesticides in their vine production and keep livestock to preserve the typical Mediterranean landscape of the property.

After the restoration of the ecosystem additional volunteering actions have taken place on the estate. For example, in March of 2022 a Bioblitz was carried out with the collaboration of universities, natural history museums, iNaturalist, the landowners and nature conservation organisations. Along one day experts of fish, macro-invertebrates, reptiles, mammals, amphibia and moths collaborated in the event. As of that date in Mas Torres 760 observations of 360 species were made by 213 different people. After the fruitful collaboration, in 2023 the stewardship contract ended. More information on the Bioblitz can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW3kQEe93wI>

4. Case studies on privately protected areas

Italy - The Pratesi Estate, an initiative by WWF Oasis



Figure 16. Meadows of the Pratesi Estate- Source: F. Marcone

The Pratesi Estate (region of Lazio in the province of Viterbo) is a private estate owned by WWF Oasis in which unique natural environments and archaeological remains coexist and where nature meets history: century-old oaks, wooded ravines and ancient monuments are the elements that characterise the landscape. The privately protected area is called Monumento Naturale Pian Sant'Angelo and overs 254 ha.

Within the area vegetation alternates areas dominated by the Mediterranean scrub and mixed deciduous woods with a rich undergrowth. The forests, which have not

been cut for commercial purposes for several decades, are evolving towards more natural, tall, uneven-aged forest formations, with the presence of dead and decaying trees and vines. The presence of some orchid species is reported, as well as anemones and cyclamens. Between the mammals the wild cat and marten can be highlighted, while the crayfish and Hermann's tortoise are of interest between insects and reptiles. Also, up to 93 bird species have been reported in the estate, of which at least 72 are breeding and 35 of conservation interest.

Within the privately protected area agriculture is managed in respect with nature, where the gorges, formed as a result of massive volcanic events and periods of glaciation, show themselves as a natural phenomenon unique to Europe. The agricultural landscape is preserved with all its traditional characteristic, such as hedges and large oak trees in the middle of fields, which are particularly important for the protection of biodiversity. For this reason the farm cultivates crops and produces hay and spelt according to ancient traditions and in compliance with ecological regulations. These landscapes are recognised as a Natural Monument in the region. It is an area of rich biodiversity, excellent for insect communities.



Figure 17. Informative panels at the Pratesi Estate. Source: F. Marcone.

The Pratesi Estate, which is embedded within interesting archaeological remains, is known for its high historical and cultural values. In fact, the area manages to reconcile the need to safeguard the environment with the promotion of its vast architectural heritage: from prehistoric finds dating back to the Palaeolithic to the monumental remains of the Falisco aqueduct and archaic necropolises.

The capability to implement effective and active environmental policies makes the area one of the most virtuous municipalities in Italy. The motivations behind this are principally related to the ability

to complement a successful management activity to protect the landscape with the protection of the historical heritage. The Pratesi Estate complements its agricultural activity with tourism and does guided tours and school visits. The estate also promotes visits of photographers and birdwatchers.

Further information can be found here:

https://elcn.eu/sites/default/files/2022-04/220222_manuale_ELCN_v8_low.pdf

<https://www.wwf.it/dove-interveniamo/il-nostro-lavoro-in-italia/oasi/oasi-di-pian-santangelo/>

Latvia - Micro-reserves

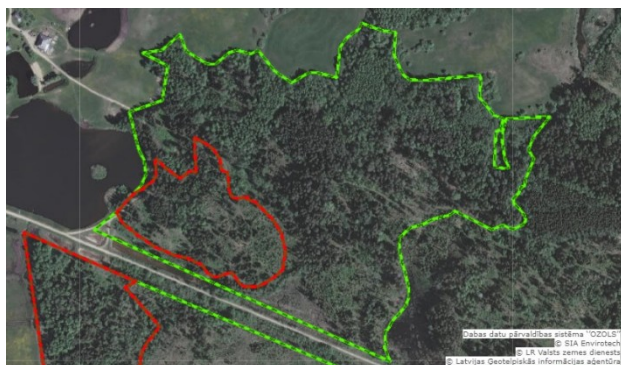


Figure 18. Delimitation of a Micro-reserve. Source: LIFE IP LatViaNature; Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia

Micro-reserves can be established nation-wide in Latvia since 2012, even though the concept dates back to the 1970s. It is a mechanism to ensure the conservation of species and habitats outside protected areas, or in protected areas if a functional zone fails to ensure it. Specifically, micro-reserves can be established for protection of certain species and habitats listed under the Cabinet Regulation No.940. In 88% of the cases, they are established for conservation of bird species. The area of a micro-reserve can reach

30 ha for species of animals, plants, fungus, lichen, algae and 200 ha for bird species. However, the normal size of micro-reserves in private land is 5-10 ha.

To establish such micro-reserves, the involvement of a certified biodiversity conservation expert, the local government, the state institutions and the landowner is required. Only when the micro-reserve is established with the consent of the landowner this area can be defined as a privately protected area as described in this chapter (voluntary conservation initiative). Any person can propose an area as a micro-reserve. The proposal is then assessed by the certifier, the landowner, the local government and is evaluated by the State Forest Service or Nature Conservation Agency. When the proposal passes through, the micro-reserves established through an administrative act.

An example of the process when a landowner proposes the establishment:

- Private landowner applies for establishment of micro-reserve in his/her land for the conservation of osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*).
- State Forest Service agrees to establish a micro-reserve (3,1 ha) and a buffer zone (8,2 ha).
- In the micro-reserve forest management is now prohibited.
- The landowner receives annual payments - 160 euro/ha to compensate for the forestry restrictions in the micro-reserve.

Micro-reserves are a permanent nature conservation mechanism. Hence, the status of a micro-reserve shall be revoked only if it has irrevocably lost its significance to the conservation of the relevant species or habitats. Furthermore, as a consequence of its establishment, nearly all economic activities (including forestry) in micro-reserves are prohibited. The restrictions in micro-reserves are similar to restrictions in nature reserves. In addition, a buffer zone may be determined for bird micro-reserves. In these buffer zones forest management activities in spring and summer (bird nesting season) are prohibited. To compensate landowners for the loss of productivity they have a right to receive an annual support payment (160 euro/ha).

The total area of micro-reserves in Latvia is more than 46,000 ha (2800 micro-reserves) of which 4000 ha have been established on private lands. However, cases where a landowner voluntarily proposes the establishment of a micro-reserve are still rather rare; during the past ten years, 5 cases have been submitted by landowners to the State Forest Service, out of the in total about 600 proposals. Unfortunately, there are several cases of conflicts between involved parties since micro-

reserve can be established without the approval of the landowner. Article 17 of Cabinet Regulation No.940 requires that the responsible institution shall send the information at its disposal characterizing the micro-reserve to be established to the landowner and local government. The landowner and local government shall provide an opinion on the proposal for the establishment of a micro-reserve (the coherence of establishing a micro-reserve, the area occupied, the location). Upon taking a decision to establish a micro-reserve, the responsible institution shall evaluate the opinion of the landowner and the local government and the social and economic interests of significance to the society.

Information was prepared by Girts Baranovskis (LIFE IP LatViaNature; Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia), e-mail: girts.baranovskis@daba.gov.lv

The Project "Optimising the Governance and Management of the Natura 2000 Protected Areas Network in Latvia" (LIFE19 IPE/LV/000010 LIFE-IP LatViaNature) is implemented with the financial support of the LIFE Programme of the European Union and Latvian State Regional Development Agency. The information reflects only the LIFE-IP LatViaNature project beneficiaries' view and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Spain - Cañada de los Pájaros



Figure 19. Environmental education at the Cañada de los Pájaros. Source: La Cañada de los Pájaros S.L.

The *Cañada de los Pájaros* located in the municipality of La Puebla del Río (Sevilla, Andalusia) is an estate of 7,5 ha under the property of *La Cañada de los Pájaros S.L.* The space harbors an artificial lagoon covering 70% of the estate and an impressive aquatic flora. The estate also has a small representation of the Mediterranean forest and shrub land, riverine vegetation and an important presence of nesting sites of threatened bird species.

The *Cañada de los Pájaros* did pioneer work in its time, as in 1991 it was the first experience of a Privately Protected Area in Spain with the aim to restore and manage a gravel pit. The Agency of Environment from the regional government of Andalusia subscribed a [collaboration agreement](#) with the property to create a concerted natural reserve (the first of private ownership declared in Spain). This was possible under the framework of the Law 2/1989, of 18 of July, which approves the Inventory of Protected Areas in Andalusia. This property of great ecological interest is included is declared Special Protection Site *Doñana Norte y Oeste*, LIC ES0000024 Doñana, is within the Biosphere Reserve Doñana and the Inventories of Wetlands of Andalusia and Spain.

But how did all start? The landowners bought the property in 1987 with own financial funds, when it was a degraded area, but with a great potential for nature conservation because of the wetland and the nearby avifauna. The land was back then a former gravel pit used as a landfill, but the owners thought that if they restore the gravel pit (not a common practice back then), and due to its proximity to Doñana, the owners could contribute their bit to nature conservation. The first actions of restoration were the removal of eucalyptus trees and cleaning the landfill during more than 4 years. Also, the lagoon and the island's structure were adapted and later planted with autochthonous species of Doñana and of the tidal marsh. After that in 1992 the property opened the space for visitors. This way, what formerly was a landfill has transformed into a protected wetland. Nowadays, birds use the property as an alternative to Doñana, especially in dry years. Up to 200 bird species can be sighted, including protected species such as *Fulicristata*, *Marmaronetta angustirostris* or *Aythya nyroca*.



Figure 20. Flock of birds at Cañada de los Pájaros. Source: La Cañada de los Pájaros S.L.

Nowadays, between the activities of the *Cañada de los Pájaros*, are the protection of species, the collaboration with research centers and universities to promote nature conservation or develop environmental education and training activities with schools, universities or trainees. Ornithological tourism is another of the activities in the property as they are recognized with the European Card for Sustainable Tourism since 2009. To assess the outcomes of the conservation and restoration activities implemented, the property promotes the monitoring and tracking of endangered species. The property to finance the management and restoration of the space is financed through entry fees to the space. It also has received some public funds for the development of specific projects, such as the reproduction of endangered species.

Nowadays, the *Cañada de los pájaros* is no longer the only concerted nature reserve in Andalusia or elsewhere in Spain, such as [Vivencia Dehesa](#) in Extremadura, cataloged as a [Private Area of Ecological Interest](#) or the Paraje Natural Municipal Salem (Vall d'Albaida, Valencia).

5. Case studies on result based agri-environmental schemes

Germany - Arbeitsgemeinschaft Biologischer Umweltschutz im Kreis Soest



Figure 21. Harrier Nes Protection. Source: R.Joest

In the federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany a RBPS exists since 1993. The scheme pays for the protection of nest sites of three bird species: the Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) in arable fields, and also to a lesser extent for the protection of Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) and Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The scheme operates in the Natura 2000 area "Hellwegbörde" in the district of Soest, Unna and Paderborn. The relevance of this RBPS comes from the fact that the harrier populations in Nordrhein-Westfalen are in steep decline. Key drivers are the declining populations of key prey species

and the loss of extensive cereal cultivation which supports these food sources. The RBPS is run by a nature conservation association called Arbeitsgemeinschaft Biologischer Umweltschutz im Kreis Soest e.V. The association is responsible for the general administration of the scheme: agreement on annual payment rates with the farming authority, monitoring of nest sites, agreement of nature conservation contracts with farmers and administrative work on behalf of the farmers, as well as, the promotion of monitoring and advice to farmers. The scheme is funded by the federal state, based on annual contracts between the farmers and the local authority, and payments are done based on the identified presence of nests of the Montagu's Harrier or Marsh Harrier. Farmers are paid for leaving an unharvested protective cereal crop zone of 50m x 50m (0.25 ha) around the nest until the young birds have fledged. The payment rate is determined annually based on the opportunity costs of the cereal crop loss published by the agricultural ministry each year, ranging between about €300 and €500 (barley payment is generally lower than wheat). Specifically, two types of payments exists if the presence of a bird nest is discovered. First and most commonly, when a harrier nest is found in a farmer's field, they are asked for the permit to monitor that nest and are offered a payment to compensate the lost cereal harvest (0,25ha). A second alternative, which is rather rare, takes place when farmers within or close to the Natura 2000 discover a nest and protects it during



Figure 22. Montagues Harrier nest. Soruce: R.Joest

cereal harvesting (excluding the nest sites that were already discovered before harvest) (Finderlohn). In this case farmers are paid 100 euro for each discovered nest. The scheme is generally well accepted by the farmers.

According to the nature conservation association approximately 95% of the Montagu's Harrier nest sites in arable fields are discovered through this approach, and more than 90% of the Marsh Harrier nests in arable fields. Once the nests are discovered, these are marked or fenced before harvesting. After the farmer announced his/her intention to harvest the field and did so, staff members of the nature conservation association or volunteers' control if the farmer has left the protective areas around the nest site and if the birds remain on the site. Then, the farmer is given a date of when he/she will be able to harvest the remaining stand. Despite these schemes, the species population in Nordrhein-Westfalen have continued to decline. In total 23 pairs of Montagu's Harrier bred in 2022 in the Hellwegbörde, all of them were protected through the scheme.

Further information can be found under:

<https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/country-infos/germany/harrier-nest-protection-in-arable-fields-weihenschutz-nordrhein-westfalen-49/>

<https://www.abu-naturschutz.de/projekte/laufende-projekte/weihenschutz>

Spain - Serra do Xistral



Figure 23. Commoners meeting. Source: Adrian Gonzalez

Under the project Life in Common Land (LICL) in the «Serra do Xistral SAC» (Lugo, Galicia, Spain), a Results Based Payment Scheme (RPBs) has been tested. The region is characterized for having the most valuable ensemble of wet heathlands and bogs of the Iberian northwest in terms of biodiversity conservation, including a blanket bog complex unparalleled in all the European southwest. These habitats are the witness of traditional farming and marked activities. It is

a classic example of how low-impact farming practices, such as extensive cattle and pony grazing, have positive impacts on vegetation diversity and structure.

The traditional extensive livestock grazing of the area also coexists with wild ponies (or bestas). Securing the continuity of traditional ways of exploitation of these animals will favour habitat conservation, whilst simultaneously preserving a horse population endemic to the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. However, these unique habitats are under threats such as: the progressive abandonment of traditional activities; habitat fragmentation, loss of population that causes the degradation of habitats that depend on human activities or climate change among others.

The project aimed at improving 3 priority habitats: active raised bogs (7110*), active blanket bogs (7130*) and Atlantic wet heaths (4020*) with the noteworthy characteristic that a large part of the Serra do Xistral SAC falls under the collective tenure (Montes Vecinales en Mano Común, MVMC). These are private forest lands collectively owned that belong to communities formed by people who have their habitual residence in one of the nearby population entities that has traditionally used the forest land. Consequently, use rights depend on residing habitually in the population in question, and abandonment or closure of households affects the commonage.



Figure 24. Horses on the bog i. Source: LIFE LICL

Life in Common Land developed a Results-Based Management Model for Conservation with the objective of integrating the existing uses in the Serra do Xistral with the conservation of the target priority habitats. It will be used from now on by these MVMC that participate in the project to manage their land. This Management Model includes a set of indicators to measure the different conservation status (CS) and quality of the priority habitats that will be the base to set up a proposal for a RPBs to be applied to areas under this special common management (MVMC). It also includes management recommendations to maintain the priority habitats in a favourable conservation status,

improve their condition when they are considered as unfavourable states, and even restore those that no longer present the elements to be considered as priority habitats.

Therefore, Life Land in Common and its main partners, Deputacion de Lugo, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC) and Universidade da Coruña (UDC) have developed a RBPs with the intention of mitigate some of the problems mentioned before. That means, payment for conservation results will be given to those communities whose farming activities have a positive impact on the conservation of the target habitats. To maintain or achieve a favourable conservation status of the habitats, we could mention some of the management practices that farmers implement such as the adaptation of the livestock management (adequate livestock density that allow pastures to be maintained or even regenerate, use of traditional breeds, etc.), scrub-clearing techniques, restoration cuttings or controlled burnings.

For the payments to be effective, the conservation status of the priority habitats were evaluated in 2020, 2021 and 2022. At the end of 2022 a single payment will be made to the communities based on the evaluation of these indicators and hence the conservation status of the habitats, using a calculation per unit of area (ha). In total, around 3.800 ha can be subject of the RBPs, meaning that 11 MVMC can take part of the scheme (around 280 common landowners belong to these MVMC). At present, the efforts are focused on including the resulting agri-environmental scheme in the Rural Development plan for Galicia through meetings with the responsible authority (Xunta de Galicia), which are aware of the latest progress in this regard.

Result Based Agri-Environmental payment scheme in France



Figure 25. Meadow with an Agri-Environmental payment scheme. Source: [RBP network](#)

In France a Result Based Agri-Environmental payment scheme have been put in place. Through this mechanism territories can define, based on a territorial diagnosis, the eligible permanent grassland areas which are under community interest and are threatened with disappearance in which this mechanism should be applied. The objective of this mechanism is to maintain the floristic richness of permanent grasslands includes in the European habitats and species directives.

The mechanism is hybrid in the sense that it complements result-based payments with complementary management based payments. The payment is made based on the time spend in adjusting practices in such a way that a set of at least 4 out of 20 indicator species are present on the site. Payments are calculated as the time the farmer has to spend for observation, readjusting practices to achieve desired outputs, transaction costs regarding learning the indicator species and registration time of data. Based on that, the maximum payment per hectare is of 66,01 euros. The payment of the mechanism is done through the second pillar of the European Common Agricultural Policy.

Further information at: <https://www.rbpnetwork.eu/country-infos/france/maintenance-of-the-floristic-richness-of-a-permanent-grassland-61/>

Latvia - Latvian initiative for Result Based Agri-Environmental Payment Schemes

From 2023 to 2026 the pilot programs “BLOOMING MEADOWS” and “LIVING FOREST” will take place in Latvia (outside Natura 2000 network). The participation in the programs is voluntary, meaning that the initiative to join the programs comes from a grassland or forest owner. Selected private owners will sign contracts with the Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia (state institution). The programs will focus on potentially biologically valuable grasslands and forest habitats of EU importance outside of Natura 2000. Owners will receive consultative and financial support in order to improve grassland or forest biodiversity.

The RBPs for grassland habitats is of relevance as in Latvia more than 60.000 ha of grassland habitats are of EU importance and in addition, there are more than 15 000 ha potentially biologically valuable grasslands. In fact, nearly 90% of biologically valuable grasslands are privately owned and more than 60% of them are located outside Natura 2000 network. The Blooming Meadows program will targeted potentially biologically valuable grasslands where relatively small support to landowners can lead to a considerable improvement in grassland biodiversity quality. Specifically, priority will be given for grasslands with a high potential to provide necessary connectivity between semi-natural grassland habitats. Once the grassland reach the condition of biologically valuable grassland, landowners can receive permanent support under the Rural Development Program of Latvia and thus being supported to continue the management of grassland in the long run. The RBPs will be utilized in order to increase landowner’s role in grassland biodiversity conservation. Landowners will receive consultations and annual financial support (87-203 euro/ha) depending on results regarding biodiversity level in the grassland. Every participant of the program will be involved in monitoring of grassland biodiversity conservation success. The program aims to improve the biodiversity of at least 675 ha of privately owned grassland through the management of 4 years under the RBPs. The overall budget of the program is 405000 euro.

For forests, the RBPs depicts is relevance as more than 40 000 ha of forest habitats of EU importance in private forests of Latvia are in areas which are not sufficiently protected by legal acts of nature conservation (meaning that they are commercial forests). Specifically, the program is divided in 3 sub-programs: I) the conservation of the most valuable forest areas; II) the creation of forest habitats through the reduction of fragmentation and expansion of habitats; and III) promoting sustainable forestry with high ecological standards. The Living Forest program aims to motivate landowners to apply biodiversity friendly forest management practices in their forests. The program will facilitate the integrity of the Natura 2000 network by means of improving connectivity by creating and supporting green infrastructure, creating stepping stones, or other elements supporting biodiversity conservation. As for the grassland program, Landowners will receive consultations and financial support in order to reach forest biodiversity conservation goals. For forest habitats of EU importance the main conservation approach will be non-intervention while for the sustainable

forestry sub-program emphasis will be put on increasing deadwood volume in forest stands and other elements and practices improving forest biodiversity. The program aims to improve the biodiversity of at least 370 ha of privately owned forests, preserved/managed for 4 years period through the RBPs. The overall budget of the program is 444 000 euro.

Further information can be found under: <https://latvianature.daba.gov.lv/en/>

Information was prepared by Girts Baranovskis Programme is developed within the project “*Optimising the Governance and Management of the Natura 2000 Protected Areas Network in Latvia*” (LIFE19 IPE/LV/000010 LIFE-IP LatViaNature) and implemented with the financial support of the LIFE Programme of the European Union and Latvian State Regional Development Agency. The information reflects only the LIFE-IP LatViaNature project beneficiaries’ view and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Romania - High Natural Value farmland landscapes

Between 2015 and 2019 Fundatia ADEPT coordinated a pilot project on Result Based Payment Schemes in Romania. The project areas consisted of High Natural Value (HNV) farmland landscapes in Southern Transylvania covering 150 ha of the Continental and Alpine biogeographical regions. These HNV farmlands are the habitat of a large diversity of species, with different management requirements. However, approximately 20% of grasslands and pastures were badly managed with overgrazing, overfertilizing and scrub encroachment. This mismanagement was caused by a collapsing traditional rural economy and years of abandonment. With the development of the scheme list of appropriate plant indicators was set-up to measure the habitat quality. Based on the monitoring of these indicators by transects the payments were calculated. Three levels of payment were established linked to minimum 5, 8 and 10 indicator species detected on the transect. The number of indicator species present in a grassland was assumed to decline if management becomes less “biodiversity-friendly”, e.g. through earlier mowing or excessive application of fertiliser. Thus, in the calculation it was assumed that a higher number of species corresponded to a greater investment by the farmer. The calculations were based on income foregone and additional costs if ideal management was carried out, and transaction costs – the costs to the farmer of learning the methodology, plant identification, and doing his own controls, as required under the measure.

To select the farms for this project, ADEPT held meetings with over 300 farmers, and a series of village associations in Târnava Mare area and Pogany-havas areas. Interested farms were selected based on several criteria, including: the farmer must be a legal user of the land (owner or rental contracts); sign a commitment for 3 years; maximum 10 ha per owner; people employed in project cannot provide land; land may be under basic payments (SAPS) but not under agri-environment agreements; only hay meadows are eligible and must be permanent grassland (older than 5 years). After the final selection the RBAPSs were piloted in Târnava Mare with 16 farmers on 72.91 ha and in Pogany-havas with 56 farmers on 90.95 ha.

The project was successful and liked by farmers as the scheme allowed them to take management decisions themselves based on local conditions and annual weather changes. The project also maintained or improved all the sites under agreements. As of 2022 these were the only RBAPSs in Romania. This was a pilot project and unfortunately results based schemes have not been adopted by the Romanian government under the Rural Development Programme. There are thus no current results-based schemes in Romania.

Further details: <https://fundatia-adept.org/projects/rbaps-results-based-payments-for-biodiversity/>

6. Case studies on temporary nature

Belgium - Signify' factory in Turnhout



Figure 26. Sheep on the Signify' industry park. Source: corridor.land.

The example was implemented in the city of Turnhout in Flanders, Belgium at the industry park of the factory Signify (formerly known as Philips Lighting)

Signify's industry park is a classic site from the 60-ies. Consisting of large area of pavings with classically pruned hedges and large short mowed lawns. The pavement is kept weed-free with the use of chemicals. This classic management is both intensive and expensive and has little to no value for people and biodiversity.

Signify' factory in Turnhout has been severely downsized in recent years. As a result, parts of the nearly 20-hectare industrial site look abandoned today. In anticipation of renewed industrial activity, nature now has a chance to develop thanks to the use of "temporary nature". A company garden is usually austere due to frequent mowing, but the lamp manufacturer aims to restore the historical vegetation of the Kempen: dry, heathery grasslands bursting with small life, kept short by sheep.

In exchange, Signify' management received a guarantee that the nature can be removed if new company land is needed in the future, because the pieces of grassland are and will remain company land. Nothing will change about the legislation. Everything starts with a zero measurement and if there is no European valuable nature at that location, then the licensing authority give the guarantee that the "new" nature that will develop or will be created can also be taken away again.



Figure 27. Dogs and sheep on the Signify industrial park. Source: corridor.land.

Signify leaves the construction and green management to specialized nature managers. It saves on maintenance, because company greenery is usually frequently mowed and treated with pesticides.

The grasslands on Signify' site will be grazed by sheep twice a year. The sheep bring seeds of native plants in their fleece. And those plants attract native animals and insects. The lawnmower and sprayer can stay aside now that the company has a legal guarantee of the temporal nature that develops there. This removes a perverse effect of nature legislation: companies are terrified of rare species establishing themselves on their property and interfering with future operations.

Germany - Advance on the Temporary Nature concept

As of 2022 in Germany the concept of temporary nature is being explored. In that sense the Ministry for Nature Conservation is trying to promote the potential of close to nature planning of business sites under the concept of “nature on time”. Temporary nature" is understood to mean the possibility that the nature and the landscape is temporarily changed positively from a nature conservation perspective and that this change may be removed again under certain conditions.

The dynamic conservation concepts of "nature on time" is desirable and feasible within the current legal framework if the overall ecological balance is positive. For that a debate has been created on the current legal possibilities and the temporal flexibility. In that sense, the German law foresees the possibility of nature conservation law exceptions for temporary nature as the focus of conservation law can be focused on populations and the bigger picture rather than on individual populations. Also, when considering “nature on time” it is foreseen to take into account the surrounding habitats. As private individuals voluntarily improve natural conditions, this must be taken into account in a favourable manner when the authorities have to decide on the permissibility of restoring the original condition and its uses. At the moment, legislation limits Temporary Nature only to companies of the extractive industry.

The new regulations recognise and update the concept of nature for a limited period of time, which is now legally anchored for the first time. These empower the Federal Environment Ministry to regulate more detailed requirements for the application of temporary nature measures for a minimum period of one year and a maximum of ten years. For the time being, it is limited to areas in which the extraction of mineral raw materials has been authorised. In the legislator's view, these areas are the most appropriate for standardising the requirements for temporary measures. Other areas, such as production sites or airports, will only be regulated in more detail when an evaluation of the regulations for the extractive industry reaches a positive assessment of nature conservation.

Within the guiding document elaborated by the “Stiftung Rheinische Kulturlandschaft” a three-step process for the implementation of the concept “nature on time” was proposed, namely the planning and solicitation phase, the implementation phase and the termination phase. The solicitation phase consists of the contact with the responsible authority, the evaluation that exemptions of nature law can be ensured, an assessment of species present on the space subject to “nature on time” before the implementation of conservation actions and the design of the conservation actions for a duration of up to ten years. During the implementation phase, the planned actions are implemented on the site and when all actions are implemented that should be notified. Finally, during the termination phase an evaluation of the correct implementation of all actions will be implemented before a new use of the site can be implemented.

A concrete example is the management of habitats of FFH-relevant amphibian species in raw material extraction sites of Bavaria (Germany). The objective of that initiative implemented between 2016 and 2021 was to safeguard and develop selected amphibian populations in raw material extraction sites during ongoing extraction of over 100 extraction sites. This was done by developing suitable measures to generate temporally and spatially distributed habitats. This creates a win-win situation for nature conservation and companies.

According to Natura 2000 the conservation state of six endangered amphibians was unfavourable with Europe-wide significance and predominantly a negative overall trend in their occurrence. There is thus an urgent need to reverse this trend and to introduce measures for the recovery of these species. These species are now largely dependent on excavation sites, as raw material extraction sites can provide important secondary habitats for amphibians. Their special importance lies above all in the fact that they are replacement habitats for near-natural wild river floodplains, which have

largely disappeared due to river regulation. Because of that the circumstance the extraction companies and the Landesbund für Vögel und Naturschutz in Bayern (LBV) established a collaboration framework.

The novelty of that collaboration framework is the conclusion of a contract under public law between the LBV, the mining company and the nature conservation authority, which serves to ensure legal certainty. The principle is that exceptions from nature conservation law are facilitated to the company in exchange for the promotion of the habitat sites of the amphibians during extraction. The cooperation projects are developed jointly by industry and nature conservation, from preliminary planning to renaturation. If no amphibian occurrences yet exist in the area, the measures should strengthen natural immigration from nearby, neighbouring populations. The areas are to be in ongoing operation. All measures should be controlled and documented with a standardised monitoring for their implementation success.

For further information:

<https://www.bfn.de/natur-auf-zeit>

<https://www.bfn.de/sites/default/files/2021-08/2019-natur-auf-zeit-bericht.pdf>

7. Links to additional case studies

Case studies on Result based agri-environmental payment mechanisms

Case studies

- Austria: Result-based Nature conservation Plan (RNP)
<https://www.console-hub.eu/7/casestudies>
- Austria: HUMUS+ Modell Ökoregion Kaindorf
<https://www.console-hub.eu/8/casestudies>
- Belgium: Collective agri-environmental scheme for species rich grassland in Beverhoutsveld
https://www.project-contracts20.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/C20_WP2_Factsheet_1_Beverhoutsveld_BE.pdf
- Germany: Viticulture on steep slopes creates diversity in the Moselle valley
https://console-project.eu/Nuevos_deliverables/DE1_fin_2022.pdf
- Germany: Organic farming for biodiversity
<https://www.console-hub.eu/18/casestudies>
- Germany: Results-based contracting for biodiversity conservation
https://project-effect.eu/case_studies/title-lorem-ipsum-dolor-sit-amet-consectetur/
- Germany: Cooperative results-based bird conservation contracts
https://project-effect.eu/case_studies/cooperative-results-based-bird-conservation-contracts/
- England: CSFF - The Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund
https://www.project-contracts20.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/C20_WP2_Factsheet_5_CSFF_UK.pdf
- Ireland: BRIDE - Biodiversity Regeneration in a Dairying Environment
<https://www.console-hub.eu/40/casestudies>
- Ireland: RBAPS - The Results-based Agri-Environment Payment Scheme (RBAPS) Pilot in Ireland
<https://www.console-hub.eu/39/casestudies>
- Ireland: The Burren Programme



<https://www.console-hub.eu/38/casestudies>

- Italy: Farmers as Custodian of a Territory
<https://www.console-hub.eu/46/casestudies>
- Netherlands: Agrarische Natuurvereniging Oost-Groningen Dutch farmers collective
https://www.project-contracts20.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/C20_WP2_Factsheet_4_ANOG_NL.pdf
- Netherlands: Biodiversity monitor for DAIRY farming
<https://www.console-hub.eu/54/casestudies>

Webinars

- Contracts2.0 - Collective Implementation AECM in the Netherlands
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKdBJkI_5TI
- Contracts2.0-Webinar_ Results-based Schemes on Arable Land - Case studies from UK & Ireland
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJE3PWHs_ac

For further information and materials on Contracts2.0 visit: <https://www.project-contracts20.eu/>

For further information and materials on Console visit: <https://www.console-hub.eu/>

For further information and materials on Effect visit: <https://project-effect.eu/>

Case studies on conservation leases

Case studies

- Germany: BioBoden - Cooperative for land protection for organic farming
https://www.project-contracts20.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/C20_WP2_Factsheet_10_BioBoden_DE.pdf
- Germany: Collaboration for sustainability between institutional landowners and tenant farmers
<https://www.console-hub.eu/19/casestudies>
- Bulgaria: Conservation and restoration of grasslands in Strandzha and Sakar mountains
<https://www.console-hub.eu/16/casestudies>
- Finland: Pasture bank - a platform for pasture leasing
<https://www.console-hub.eu/30/casestudies>
- Latvia: DVIETE LIFE
<https://www.console-hub.eu/49/casestudies>

For further information and materials on Contracts2.0 visit: <https://www.console-hub.eu/>

Bellow we also share additional resources developed by the H2020 project Console on conservation easements.

Case studies

- Finland: Carbon Market – a non-profit compensation service for restoring ditched peatlands
<https://www.console-hub.eu/29/casestudies>

For further information and materials on Contracts2.0 visit: <https://www.project-contracts20.eu/>

For further information and materials on Console visit: <https://www.console-hub.eu/>

Case studies on land stewardship contracts

Case studies

- Latvia: Forest Management
<https://www.console-hub.eu/51/casestudies>

For further information and materials on Contracts2.0 visit: <https://www.console-hub.eu/>