

**2nd EU level workshop in the context of the HERCULES project
June 3, 2015 - EESC Building, rue de Trèves 74, Brussels
Room TRE 7701**

Landscape Stewardship: Integrating a broad suite of landscape values into rural development policies

Minutes of the meeting

12:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:10	Welcome by Tom Jones , Member of the Bureau of the Specialised Section NAT, EESC and introduction by Tobias Plieninger , HERCULES Project Coordinator, Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen
14:10-14:25	European Review on Integrated Landscape Initiatives by María García Martín , University of Freiburg, Chair for Landscape Management
14:25-14:55	Discussants: Birgit de Boissezon , Head of Unit, Unit Management of Natural Resources, DG RTD, EC Costa Carras , Vice-President, Europa Nostra Tom Jones , Member of the Bureau of the Specialised Section NAT, EESC
14:55-15:20	Open discussion Moderator: Andrew Lewer , MEP
15:20-15:35	A collaborative framework for engaging land managers in landscape stewardship by Christopher Raymond , Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen
15:35-16:05	Discussants: Frederik van Everdingen , Director, Blond Breeding Peter van der Goot , Adviser Rural Development, ECNC Vujadin Kovacevic , Policy officer, Unit Biodiversity, DG ENV, EC
16:05-16:30	Open discussion Moderator: David King , Board Member of EcoAgriculture Partners
16:30-17:00	"Take-home message" by Tobias Plieninger , HERCULES Project Coordinator

Forewords: Welcome by Tom Jones and Introduction by Tobias Plieninger

Tom JONES opened the second European level workshop by underlining the strong connection between natural and cultural heritage. He presented his engagement in rural activities and landscape preservation, notably at the section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) as well as at the local level through its political and farming activities in Wales. He underlined the potential of the second pillar of the CAP, which focuses on rural development, to promote and improve European landscapes.

Tobias PLIENINGER introduced the participants to HERCULES and the broad vision of the project which seeks to provide research on the protection and management of cultural landscape of particular value in order to empower public and private actors to sustainably



manage them. Research is thus undertaken at the local level through five study landscapes and the results are then relayed at the European level. Mr Plieninger underscored that landscapes encompass a broad set of values ranging from nature conservation to tourism which can sometimes be in conflict to each other or even at risks due to human pressure on nature such as urbanization, the intensification of agriculture and the rise of renewable energies.

Mr Plieninger explained that the concept of landscape stewardship is the current tool used for landscape planning and management. This concept can be defined as “the efforts to create, nurture and enable responsibility in landowners and resource users to manage and protect land and its natural and cultural heritage”. In the framework of HERCULES, an important characteristic of landscape stewardship is that it allows for the combination of different landscape values. In addition, it involves inter-sectoral coordination and interactions between various types of capital (economic, natural, social and cultural). Finally, Mr Plieninger emphasized that landscape does not constitute a policy arena on its own but is addressed in several international instruments such as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity; the Global Future Earth research initiative; the European Landscape Convention; the Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital and the EU-Rural Development Policy.

1. European Review on Integrated Landscape Initiatives, Maria García Martín

Maria GARCÍA MARTÍN presented her research on Integrated Landscape Initiatives (ILIs) which is carried out in Europe. She defined ILIs as “initiatives that foster the provision of a broad range of landscape services and contributes to the personal and social fulfilment and well-being of the people that perceive them”. Such initiatives are built on a mainstream strategy. They have been undertaken to answer on the one hand to the challenges faced by landscapes to keep on providing their key values due to intense and radical changes and on the other hand to a demand of the society for high quality space, food and tourism.

Mrs García Martín explained that ILIs are perfect example of landscape stewardship because they work at the landscape scale, foster inter-sectorial coordination and multi-stakeholder processes and are highly participatory. The aim of her research is thus to provide insights on ILIs, the actors involved as well as their objectives.

Before presenting the results of her research, Mrs García Martín stated that data on ILIs were collected through surveys of a representative sample of initiatives which encountered an answer rate of 25%.

The first set of results that Mrs García Martín presented regards the landscape features to which ILIs are related. Analysis shows that ILIs are mainly addressing rural (51%) and cultivated (47%) landscape with the primary goals of conserving nature (51%), preserving cultural heritage (45%) and landscape beauty (44%).

Another set of results brought forward by Mrs García Martín shows that the impulse for action principally comes from the local stakeholders (40%) concerned by landscape management. Moreover, the first actors involved in ILIs are independent experts (24%), local NGO or civil association (22%), government staff (18% to 19% in function of the level). The

sectors engaged in ILIs are primarily natural resources (73%), agriculture (58%), tourism (51%) and education (45%).

Mrs García Martín stated that her research led her to the conclusion that ILIs are awareness raising and multi-sectorial coordination agents towards the preservation of the values of landscape. Research shows that ILIs are principally funded through national (43%) and European (30%) funds. However, the essential problem they face is a lack of funding (40%) the lack political support (30%) and the lack of clear policies (25%).

Mrs García Martín advocated that to sustain ILIs, inter-sectorial collaboration is needed across nature conservation, agriculture and tourism to enhance landscape values through the proper management of food production, rural livelihoods. Involvement of local communities in the monitoring process of the results of the initiatives is also needed to ensure their long-term success. Finally, the role of social capital for landscape stewardship is key as there is an interdependence between the two: social capital supports the actions of the ILIs but the actions of the ILIs also build social capital.

Mrs García Martín concluded that the protection of the functions of landscape should be led by the people living it but not only the farmers as we are all responsible for the future of European landscapes. However, initiatives at the local level are not enough to alleviate the stress put on landscape. Reinforcement of funding and of the legal framework, notably from the EU is necessary to create a community of landscape stewards.

2. Discussions

2.1. Birgit de Boissezon

Birgit de BOISSEZON presented the Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage, “Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe”. She briefly described the objectives for cultural heritage in Europe (Economy; Society; Environment). Then, she focused on the EU efforts to integrate cultural and natural capital and on the future orientations under Horizon 2020 (H2020) on cultural heritage and cultural landscapes. She stated that HERCULES fits well in this perspective as it provides for an integrated approach to address various issues at the landscape scale. This is the reason why this research programme is different than previous ones that generally addressed specific issues such as biodiversity, water pollution.

Mrs de Boissezon explained that in the EU framework, there are several instruments which provide policies on how to integrate cultural and natural capital: the European Landscape Convention, the Charter of Rome which addresses nature conservation and the reports of the Expert Group on H2020 which works on the common heritage generated by natural and cultural factors. For example, efforts will be made to analyse the potential of Natura2000 to protect also cultural heritage.

Mrs de Boissezon put forward that in this context, the EU is promoting new R&I orientations for an innovative use of cultural heritage. The latter is presented as an investment opportunity rather than a cost because it can become a production factor for the economy as well as a catalyzer for social cohesion and environmental sustainability. As a consequence from this approach, there is a shift from the conservation to the transmission of cultural

capital which is a more dynamic perspective. In addition, it enshrines cultural capital into wider economic, social and environmental development policies. These recommendations from the Expert Group are in fact also applicable to natural capital.

Mrs de Boissezon detailed the future orientations of cultural heritage under H2020 which seek to create transfer and sharing of knowledge, stakeholder's involvement and empowerment and new collective arrangements and strategies. In addition, the EU is planning to invest more and more in cultural heritage: from 40M € in 2014 and 35M€ in 2015 to 120M€ in 2016-2017. Attention will be put on the selection of the stakeholders better placed to reach the aims of the research projects.

2.2. Costa Carras

Costa CARRAS started his presentation by questioning on the actors responsible for the preservation of landscape and cultural heritage apart from the people who live surrounded by that heritage. He said that Europa Nostra offers a particular perspective to answer this question as it is based on a bottom-up approach. In 2010, the idea emerged that Europa Nostra, while having limited financial resources would provide for advices on how to proceed for the protection of cultural heritage at the local level.

Mr Carras explained that people who take initiative to protect their heritage or the landscape they live in need support to face other stakeholders who want to impact those places which do not have any value to them.

Mr Carras stated that in 4 years, Europa Nostra shared its expertise with an average of 50 sites and initiatives. These experiences have brought various results such as a mainstream policy, a website and an extended network working on the preservation of cultural heritage. The criteria on which Europa Nostra based its selection of initiatives to carry out its policy relate notably on the commitment and public support that the person leading the project is receiving locally. Such projects can also relate to landscape as for example in Greece, farmers have joined the network of Europa Nostra.

Mr Carras emphasized that in the framework of organized research projects, collaboration with NGOs involved in the sector of the research is essential to support the scholars with information and examples of what is done in practice. This is interestingly the case of HERCULES. It enables the project to address issues which are really meaningful for the stakeholders of the sector concerned. In the sense, networks such Europa Nostra and HERCULES satisfy an important public demand which is to ensure that popular voices are being heard.

2.3. Tom Jones

Tom JONES started his speech by highlighting the importance of local initiatives to strengthen landscape values. He took the example of the German Green Week which was organized by citizens and where an array of very diverse products were displayed, showing the richness of nature and the diversity of agricultural production means.

Mr Jones underlined that in the whole agricultural and food production system, there is a strong reliance on the knowledge acquired by the previous generations. Therefore, attention and efforts should also be placed on the transfer of that knowledge to make sure that the investments made for protection are not lost.

Mr Jones emphasized that it is important that land managers receives incentives to continue to invest themselves to sustain the nature and products' biodiversity. Moreover society should realize that many investments are made without any financial public support. This is often the case of investments necessary to protect landscape values. However, the management of private landscape is often put under stressed from the fact that land managers are often constrained to meet other requirements.

Mr Jones explained that on the basis of the CAP, it is within the second pillar on rural development that efforts can be made to preserve and develop landscape values. For example, initiatives focused on empowering rural actors to act for the preservation of the landscape by giving them skills are very useful (eg: how to build dry stones walls). This would strengthen the position of current actors and also has the potential to bring and form a new generation of citizens to the countryside.

3. Questions and Answers I

Andrew LEWER asked different questions to the panelists and was joined by other participants attending the workshop.

To Mrs García Martín, Mr Lewer asked whether the national funds supporting ILIs were rather originating from local or national governments and also what are the priorities set by the different authorities offering funds for ILIs.

Mrs García Martín answered that results of her research show that national funds are mainly used to support the agricultural sector whereas European funds are used to support initiatives related to landscape, tourism and education.

To Mrs de Boissezon, Mr Lewer directed his question on the budget foreseen for investment in cultural heritage and the balance between top-down and bottom-up approach.

Mrs de Boissezon answered that the new approach promoted under H2020 is broader and not only based on cultural heritage but is also built on social benefits and the environment. The Commission is currently trying to bring different elements and sectors of activities together within H2020. To reach the objectives of the strategy, it is important to rely on reflexive and bottom-up activities. On the balance between top-down and bottom-up activities, Mrs de Boissezon replied that the approach chosen depends on the effectiveness of the delivery. Moreover, it is necessary to be well informed about local activities in order to offer the appropriate mainstream policies. In this sense, the EU can give incentives to local initiatives to be built but the real work has first to be led and realized at the local level.

To Mr Jones, Mr Lewer asked whether it was possible according to him to combine experience of farmers with new production systems. Richard WAKEFORD, expert for DG Agriculture which is also setting its priorities under H2020 for rural development emphasized on the sources of stress put on European landscape resulting from the activities of different sectors. He also underlined that the local ignorance of what farmers are doing and investing to manage and preserve local landscape and biodiversity is the main obstacle to local involvement. He made a call for a public disclosure of agricultural subsidies as he believed that this would give incentives for local involvement.



Mr Jones answered to these reactions by saying that it is necessary to explain to the people that the money granted to farmers is not just a gift made to them but a mean to have an impact at the landscape scale, on a large piece of land (which might not be continuous but rather composed of different bits). He added that bottom-up and top-down approaches go hand in hand as to reach constructive outcomes, cooperation between experts and farmers or practitioners is needed.

4. A collaborative framework for engaging land managers in landscape stewardship, Christopher Raymond

Christopher RAYMOND presented his research on landscape stewardship. He started his presentation by recalling the reforms made in the CAP now providing that between 2015 and 2020 a balance of around 3 billion Euros will be transferred from Pillar I (agricultural market support) to Pillar II (rural development) schemes. This has created tensions among farming who advocate for the financing of Pillar I and conservation lobbies who plead for a greater control on land management to halt biodiversity decline. However, it is accepted that landscape scale approaches are necessary to build agro-environmental schemes.

Mr Raymond thus highlighted that the key question is how do we manage for a diversity of landscape values and land management activities important to different types of land managers? Surveys have indicated that local communities identify different values in their respective landscape. In addition, there are various kinds of land managers and they have different views on the understanding of landscape stewardship. Research has shown that several views on the meaning landscape stewardship derive from the frame under which it is seen (environmental, production, holistic, instrumental). Moreover, the importance given to each of those frames depends on the type of land manager.

Mr Raymond found that some values and landscape management actions constitute a common ground on the understanding of landscape stewardship as they were recognized as important in each of the frames. Regarding landscape values, it is understood that landscape stewardship covers at least the following: sense of community; ancient feeling/protecting the past; caretaker of land for future generations. Concerning landscape practices, the following are considered to contribute to landscape stewardship: the minimal use of fertilizers and chemicals and animal care/husbandry.

A second question that Mr Raymond inquires within his research is whether collaborative agro-environmental frameworks consider tailoring investments to land manager groups based on their distinguishing landscape values and landscape stewardship motivations, and whether it is possible to identify bridges across groups previously perceived to have conflicting interests. Results indicate that there are five preferred designs and delivery for agro-environmental schemes. The first preference goes to tailor investments to farm systems (16.7%). The second preference regards a better communication of funding rules and supported practices (11.9%). The third preference is to tailor investments to catchments or ecosystems (9.5%). The fourth preference is to provide more education and training courses (8.3%). The fifth preference concerns a reinforced support for smallholders (7.1%).

5. Discussions

5.1. Frederik van EVERDINGEN

Frederik van EVERDINGEN gave the point of view of a land manager and put the ideas discussed so far in a practical perspective. Thus, he made several suggestions on how to implement them in an achievable manner.

Mr van Everdingen explained that the text of the CAP is so thick and detailed that it is difficult for farmers to implement it. He acknowledged that helpful consultancy is provided with that text but it remains nevertheless complicated to implement the recommendations in every situations and countries.

He proposed that the key parts of the text should be shortened and especially re-written with clear and simple terms such that land managers could refer to them for their activities.

Mr van Everdingen highlighted that knowledge on farming practices tend to be lost because it is no longer something taught at school and information on farming management is not easily accessible. Thus, he suggested that efforts should be made to reinforce education on thematic such as plant growing, how to run a farm, etc.

Mr van Everdingen insisted that policy should become more flexible, for example regarding subsidies. Subsidies are generally granted for a specific type of actions (eg: grassland), an option could be to make them more integrated such that they are adapted to the landscape scale. Currently, agricultural policy is very general and does not always offer support to land managers who face very concrete problems and issues. It is thus necessary to discuss land management with landowners and to integrate their perspective within the relevant policy framework. In addition, more and more constraints are put on property rights and this makes it difficult for landowners to cope with all the legal requirements they are expected to fulfill. He mentioned that it is more important to instigate motivation to farmers to ensure that they manage their farms in a friendly way for the environment and the landscape rather than putting at risk the survival of their business with strong legal requirements.

Mr van Everdingen also underlined the role that land managers can have as landscape stewards. He stated that it is important that farmers keep their farms tidy, clean and welcoming. He suggested that platforms could be created where land managers could discuss, share and exchange good practices they implement on their farms.

Finally, Mr van Everdingen emphasized on the fact that more attention should be placed on how policy and initiatives can be implemented in practice and this is where collaboration with land managers is essential.

5.2. Peter van der GOOT

Peter van der GOOT shared his experience as an official from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and an adviser for the European Centre for Nature Conservation. He mainly discussed the Dutch experience and strategy on land consolidation and re allotment which dates back from the aftermath of WW2 and efforts to strive more self-sufficiency in food production.

Mr van der Goot explained that in the Netherlands, laws were adopted to establish a framework for land consolidation. The project encountered the support of landowners and

users who voted massively in favour. However, in the 70's protests started to rise against the project because it placed a strong emphasis on agriculture and neglected nature, landscape and the environment.

Mr van der Goot stated that during the 90's, a Pan European Network was implemented but forer projects were often repeated to fill in the demands of the ecological network. Thus, a lot of land was bought by the government and landscape plans were introduced to give to the project a 'green' image.

Mr van der Goot highlighted that until 2015, laws were redefined several times in order to adapt to the various challenges. As a result, the land consolidation process worked well but there is a public resistance against legal procedures. In addition, public statements were criticizing the fact that landscapes had been over designed. Consequently, bottom-up approaches are now promoted and the responsibility has been decentralized to the provinces.

The current tool used by the Dutch to set up a strategy on landscape is the 'Re allotment for growth'. It works on a participatory basis where local stakeholders have to gather first and then to ask local government for support on the mainstreaming and implementation of the agreement they reached. In two years, very positive results have been reached. As a result, promotion for this tool started to be made in neighboring regions and cooperation with Germany and Flanders is organized.

5.3. Vujadin Kovacevic

Vujadin KOVACEVIC addressed landscapes from a biodiversity perspective. Through his presentation, Mr Kovacevic underlined the importance to strengthen biodiversity in agricultural production. He questioned how landowners can increase ecosystem services for themselves but also for the society.

Ms Kovacevic described various European policies which are part of H2020 for biodiversity that are useful for landscape management. He mentioned the Mapping and Assessing of Environmental Services (MAES) which is coordinated by the European Commission (EC) but the inputs is provided by the Member States. He also presented the Priorities for the Restoration of Ecosystems and their Services which include the restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems. Then, he explained that the definition given to Green Infrastructures initiatives reflects the definition of landscape stewardship. Moreover, the aim of green infrastructures is to provide more ecosystems services to the society while protecting ecosystems in the same time. Lastly, he underlined that landscape stewardship is also embedded within the Natura2000 network.

Mr Kovacevic emphasized that these projects should be built on all scales, from the regional to the national and the European levels. Cross-sectors collaboration, multi-stakeholders cooperation and participatory processes are essential to ensure the success of these initiatives and thus reach the most optimal usage of the landscapes. The EC is contributing to this by reinforcing the financial means dedicated to rural development as a result from the reform of the CAP.

Mr Kovacevic stressed that biodiversity has a key role to play because when it is strengthened, there are more actors in the system and as a result the resources are more efficiently used. Thus, he said it is important that landowners reinforce and also increase the

diversity of ecosystem services first for themselves but also for the society. However, he suggested that the society could also pay land managers and farmers to deliver more precise ecosystem services (eg: minimal use of pesticides to reduce water pollution). Indeed, biodiversity increases the authenticity of an area (eg: Slovenian honey can only be labelled if it is produced by a particular type of local bee).

6. Questions & Answers II

David KING led the second round of reactions, questions and answers. He focused the debate on stakeholder engagement and invited stakeholders from different sectors to react on the session.

Marie-Alice BUDNIOK, Legal Director of the ELO, presented the 3WatEr LIFE+ project for which the ELO received the Natura2000 Award in 2014 for stakeholder consultation and conflict resolution. She explained that the project brought together farmers, the municipal government and green NGOs and aimed at the restoration of the landscape in a lake area of Limburg which is protected under Natura2000. She recommended that schemes on land consolidation such as set up in the Netherlands should be participatory and not compulsory because it is harder to cope with mandatory requirements in case of conflicts. Lastly, she also raised a question on how to include groups who benefits from landscape without contributing to its development (eg: cyclists, tourists) within landscape stewardship policies.

Jan-Gerrit DEELEN, working for the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, made the observation that when money is granted to farmers, it is necessary to ensure that the investment also benefits to other local stakeholders. He insisted on the general involvement of stakeholders, including NGOs, even though the participation of the latter is not compulsory.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General of the ELO, said that he was not in favour of land consolidation because too many damages have been done to the landscape and there is not enough money invested in the second pillar of the CAP on rural development to repair them. He emphasized that it is important to ensure that landowners and land managers have access to funding and not only green NGOs. He criticized the reform of the CAP which is unclear, messy and meant to fail according to him. On the other hand, he underlined that the Birds and Habitats Directive are good directives, that the text of the latter should not be modified but rather some more flexible interpretations of the annexes is necessary to fix the current problems that local stakeholders are experiencing with the Natura2000 Network.

Peter van der Goot replied that the current Dutch scheme on land consolidation is essentially participatory and bottom-up and this is why it encounters such a success.

Tom Jones made the observation that while land belongs to landowners, there is no such a clear answer on who owns the landscape. This is why it is necessary to involve as many stakeholders and organizations as possible as long as they are concerned by the issue of landscape stewardship.

Richard Wakeford underlined that the current problem is that there is no connection at all between what research and science has shown and the policy measures which have been adopted through the greening of the CAP. He also advocated for additional research on ecosystems values.

Lastly, Christopher Raymond stressed that consultation and participatory processes have the clear advantage of ensuring motivation and ownership of the initiative by the local stakeholders. However, these schemes can be problematic in situations where decisions have to be made very quickly because of the number of actors that have to agree together.

7. Take home message, Tobias Plieninger

Landscape in EU policies – Landscape is, as one contributor pointed out, the late-comer among the research themes of the 7th framework programme of the EU. This is somehow indicative for EU and many national policies where landscape has remained unconsidered for a long time. But there are signs for some change. For example, practical approaches to cultural heritage conservation and to ecosystem management are step-by-step moving to the landscape scale. Also, landscape is a serious concern for large parts of the public, as many prominent land-use conflicts, for example around mining or renewable energies show. Landscape is also increasingly seen as an investment opportunity and may receive higher EU funding priority in the near future.

The rise of landscape stewardship – A multitude of examples from throughout Europe (as regular readers on this blog are aware) demonstrate that there is indeed something like landscape stewardship in practice. Landscape stewardship approaches comprise many different types of groups and initiatives, often united by an interest in maintaining and developing the cultural ecosystem services of a particular landscape. Landscape stewardship initiatives do not fit easily into established categories – quite often they are partly private, partly public, for example. Also, they frequently cross borders between fields such as nature conservation, agriculture, or cultural heritage. Therefore, they have difficulties in linking to established policy fields, but there are exemplars in the Netherlands and elsewhere where such initiatives were assigned formal responsibility in land management.

Framings, values, and management actions of landscape stewards – Who are landscape stewards as individuals? A survey among land managers in the UK showed that there are many different framings of landscape stewardship, with some focusing more on environmental, others on production orientations. These framings are accompanied by different values and management practices. Interestingly, after around 25 years of agri-environmental funding, a particular group of landscape stewards being characterised by an „instrumental framing“ (whose values are mainly determined by available funding opportunities) has emerged.

Fostering innovative models of landscape stewardship – Although motivation of land managers is crucial for achieving agri-environmental goals, existing incentive schemes often have not considered this diversity of different framings and values very well. Rural development policies might foster landscape stewardship through tailoring of policy targets to specific land-use systems, landscape attributes or catchments; through more frequent and timely communication of policy changes; through providing longer-term funding security; and through broadening the types of values supported, such as education and support for a local, green food culture. A big challenge for the future design and implementation of rural development policies will be to realign such features with the need for administrative simplification of funding schemes. To mainstream landscape stewardship in land management practice, we may have to go wider than just reinventing funding schemes. For example, some participants expressed the need for socially and ecologically responsible land



consolidation programmes, bringing landscape structure together with current demands for landscape functions (e.g., for outdoor recreation). Also, we do not know well enough how for example farmers perform in terms of landscape stewardship. This calls for better social-ecological indicators that would be used for cross-farm comparisons and that might even become part of accounting systems. Finally, the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy has large potential to become a vehicle for promoting landscape stewardship.