

final thoughts...

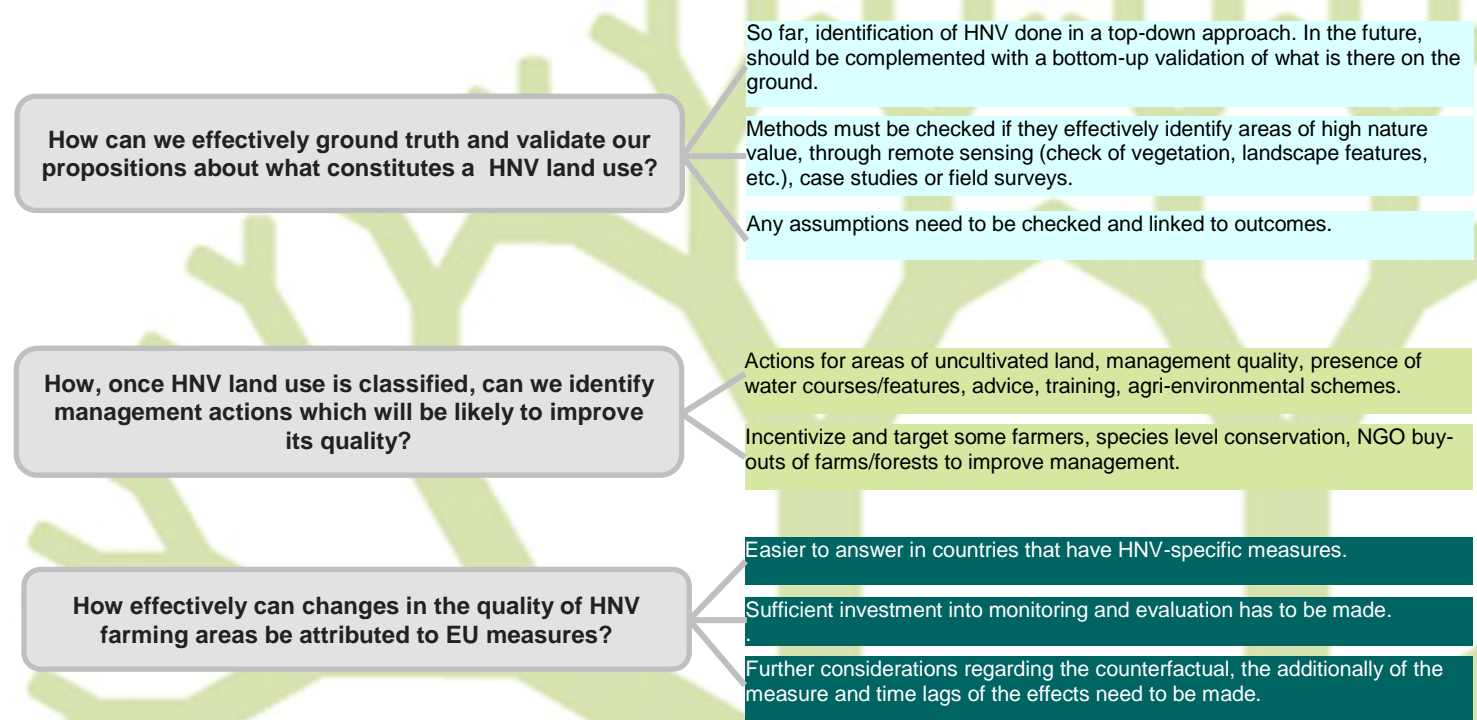
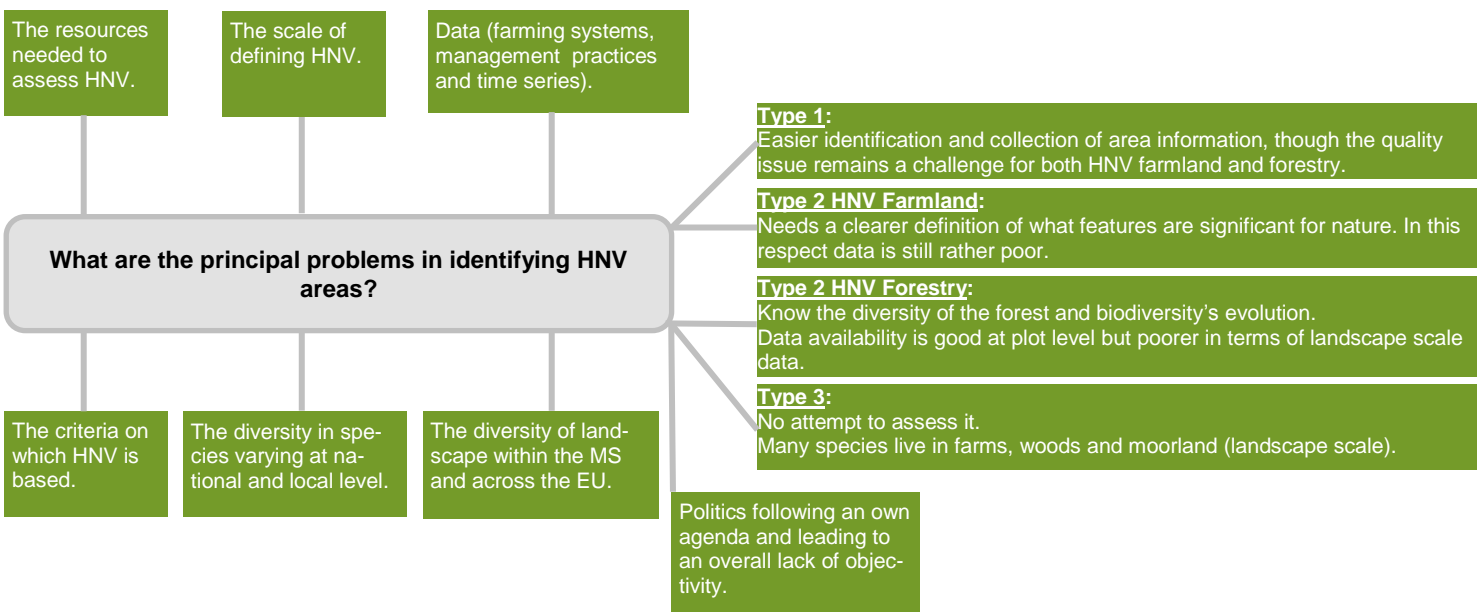


In the afternoon session, four breakout groups considered four different questions which arose out of the earlier presentations and the related discussions.



European Evaluation Network for Rural Development

Good Practice Workshop High Nature Value farmland and forestry



"Good Practice HNV" webpage, [click here](#)

main focus >>>

Edinburgh, 20 February 2012

Purpose of the Workshop

- Consider High Nature Value (HNV) farmland and forestry, and the common and specific features in the assessment of rural development impacts;
- Learn about approaches used for the HNV indicator in the context of the Mid-Term Evaluation;
- Identify good practices from the Member States;
- Draw lessons for the future of the HNV indicator.

back to basics >>>

Why a workshop on HNV farmland and forestry?

Supporting the preservation and development of High Nature Value (HNV) farming and forestry systems is a clear objective of the European Commission in its rural development policy. There is now widespread recognition of the need to embrace HNV rural land use more actively. Nineteen Member States gathered in Edinburgh in February to consider the scope for HNV farming and forestry and, more importantly, to explore how HNV land use could be more effectively brought within with the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF).

A number of Member States have developed different approaches dealing with the identification of HNV farming and forestry. If the first stage is to identify HNV farming and forestry, a vital second stage is reporting in changes in its condition, whether these changes are market or policy driven. In the Mid-Term Evaluations of the Rural Development Programmes 2007-13, more work is recognised as needed on evaluation of HNV land use and assessment of rural development impacts.

It has been long recognised that low intensity land management is associated with high levels of both biodiversity and landscape quality. Simplification of the enterprise mix and intensification of agro-ecosystems and forestry systems is known to reduce aggregate biodiversity and the long-term threat to biodiversity in more intensive rural land use systems has been widely acknowledged since the early 1980s, whether we are dealing with intensive cereal production or single species tree plantations. There is abundant evidence of biodiversity decline in more intensively farmed and forested areas. Accordingly, since the early 90's and the active promotion of HNV farming and forestry by environmental lobbyists, over 40% of the farmed area of Europe seems to generate high nature values as a by-product of its farming systems. The same might be true for forestry as well. Although before 1990 already certain parts of the EU contained areas of HNV farming and forestry, the EU enlargement exposed much evidence of small-scale farming and extensive pastoralism. Particularly in countries where peasant farming was never fully replaced, either due to post war political settlement or difficulties of farm collectivisation in mountain areas, HNV farming was enthusiastically evidenced by western European researchers and emergent NGOs such as the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism. Recently the EU has committed to integrate environmental concerns into other EU policies and a set of agri-environmental indicators was identified including HNV farmland. The CAP reforms of the current and next programming periods recognise the need to address concerns about farmland biodiversity decline. HNV farming has thus acquired a prominent position considering how biodiversity can be recognised and supported in EU rural policy. As forestry measures have been embraced recently in the RDP, it has become necessary to acknowledge that forestry has the capacity to deliver high nature values. Mapping HNV land use with great accuracy through good practice exchanges is necessary as well as the need to apply the CMEF and look to refine the indicators.



The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Commission.

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set the scene >>>

What is HNV Farming and Forestry ?

Anderson et al. (2003) proposed a threefold classification of HNV farming which has been widely accepted and also used as the basis for forestry

Type 1 - Farmland with a high proportion of semi-natural vegetation:

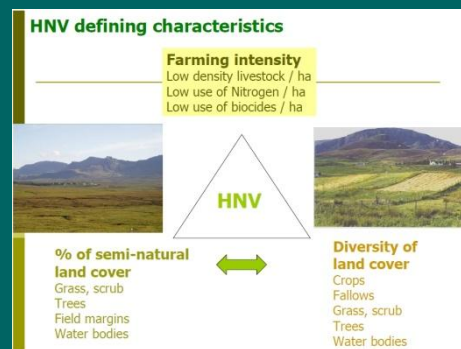
- o Farming system delivering high nature values;
- o Low intensity farming systems;
- o Low or no fertiliser applications;
- o Maintenance of semi-natural vegetation;
- o Sometimes grazed by stocks of trans-humant pastoralists.

The pasture woodlands of many parts of Europe provide a part-agricultural, part-forestry example of this type of HNV land use.

Type 2 - Farmland with a mosaic of low intensity agriculture and natural and structural elements:

- o A product of the "fit" of land use into the landscape;
- o In different landscapes, different natural features cannot be cultivated;
- o Part of land management unit;
- o Rarely actively and almost never intensively managed;
- o Field boundaries as an integral part of stock management can be valued features.

The more variable the land resource, the greater the scope for an HNV land use mosaic where HNV resides in the unused land vs. the extensive management practices.



Type 3 - Farmland supporting rare species and with a high proportion of European or world populations:

- o A particular species is found to depend on a particular land management;
- o Sometimes subtle changes in management regimes cause species declines.

In this type of HNV system the challenge is to create resilience in the species under scrutiny.

introductory session >>>

What is the state of progress in identifying HNV landscapes?

Zélie Peppiette introduced the European Commission's perspective in the identification of HNV landscapes. For further information, click [here](#)

General observations

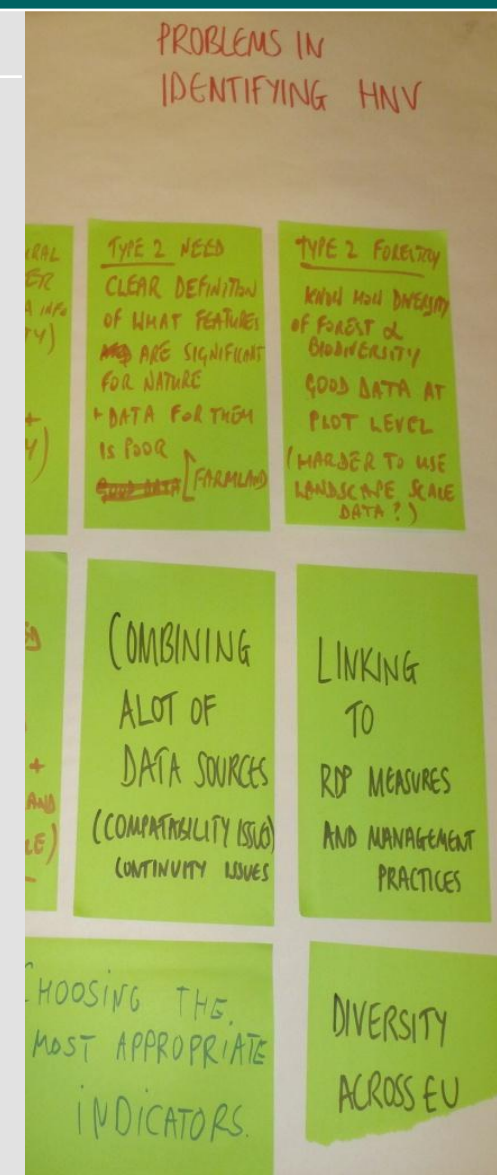
Growing policy interest	Most approaches focused on the extent and not on the conditions of HNV	All land identified under type 1 are maybe not really type 1
Need to map HNV areas to respond to policy imperative and RDP indicator		Type 3 mostly identified from designations, panels of experts and sampling
Variable methods used to map HNV areas (single or a suite of approaches)		Type 2 turned out to be the hardest type to identify

MTE findings

- Out of 94 MTE reports, only half contain any assessment of HNV areas.
- Only 5% contained methods that could be described as advanced.

A view to the ex post evaluation

- Need to consider HNV condition and its trajectory and not only the extent of HNV land use (current methods tend to capture snapshots rather than the evolution).
- Necessity to exploit the richness of context specific methods and data.



exchange session >>>

Touring parts of Europe

The delegates heard in detail about experiences of three countries. Two presentations were made about Scotland (one about HNV farming the second forestry). Two other presentations were given from contrasting parts of Europe (on the approach to identify HNV farming in Austria and Estonia).

Scotland: HNV Farming – Davy McCracken

HNV land needs to be identified rapidly, based less on field survey and more on proxy or surrogate data. Land cover data is available, but probably at too coarse grained a level. There is no available source on land management practices. The surrogate rules which Davy and his colleagues came up with for Scotland were that land would be assumed to have HNVs where 70% or more was under rough grazing, stocking density was at less than 0.2 Livestock Units/ha on rough grazing and less than 1.0 Livestock Unit/ha on the enclosed (or inbye) land. Since such data are available from the annual farm census and IACS sources, this provides a first approximation of the HNV area. Different degrees of semi-naturalness of vegetation can be attributed to differences in stocking rates. Using these IACS-based approaches, Davy estimates that about 40% of the agricultural area is of HNV status. [To read the full presentation, click here](#)

Scotland: HNV Forestry – Gordon Patterson

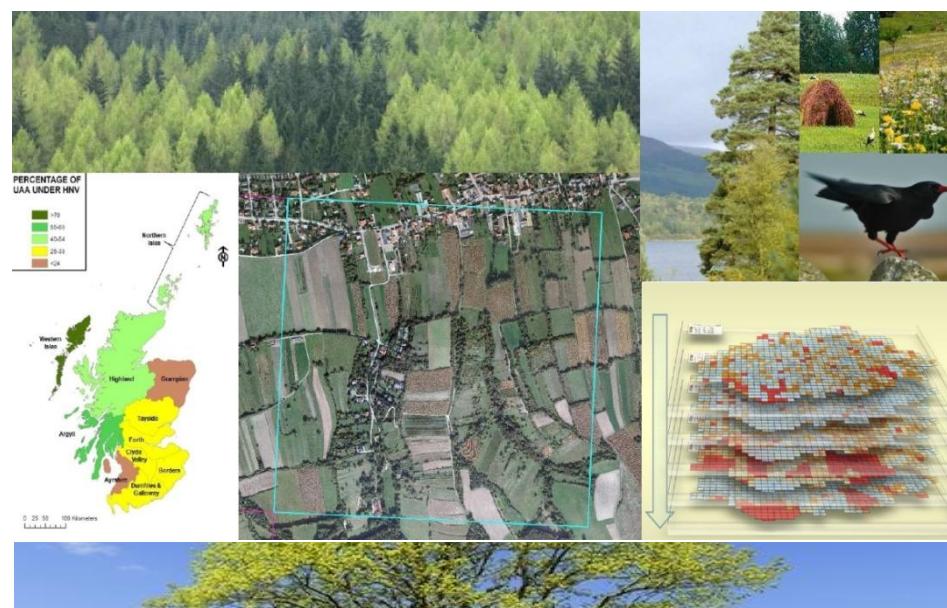
A particular challenge in Scotland is the extent of relatively recently planted forests, which could not be described as close to nature land management systems. Scotland was very lightly forested at the beginning of the 20th Century and its 18% land cover by trees compares with only 6% less than a century ago. The forestry equivalent of Type 1 HNV farmland delimits native and ancient woodlands. This is proportionately less than the agriculture figure. The Type 2 equivalent is based on a diversity of features within the woodland area. Here the threshold requirements required two out of six criteria to be present. The Forestry Commission has undertaken detailed woodland inventories and these actually allow the sharper definition of HNV woodland, although of course the bundle of criteria that should lead to HNV status remains negotiable. He highlighted that a map of Type 3 HNV land has still to be developed for Scotland. [To read the full presentation, click here](#)

Austria – Elisabeth Schwaiger

An approach based on IACS data was presented (including parcel complexity, biotype data and aerial photographs). HNV farming was identified on the basis of high value (= low intensity) agricultural parcels and/or where structural values were high (derived from air photos). The significant addition in this study was the plausibility check. Is it possible to go out in the field and ground truth the findings of the rule-based designation of HNV farming? The Austrian team recognised a need to refine their approaches when dealing with diverse grazing mosaics, which are harder to pick up from air photo or IACS databases. Furthermore, she highlighted that a study for HNV Type 3 is currently being tendered in Austria. [To read the full presentation, click here](#)

Estonia – Tambet Kikas

Estonia already supports HNV areas in Natura-designated areas. Semi-natural habitat and the landscape mosaic are seen as the key determinants of HNV land use. The Estonians use a 1km grid approach and have selected a number of criteria for HNV status, including share of permanent grassland, stocking intensity, and additionally a soil type criterion for the agricultural use, but also criteria on presence of bird species, habitat types, designations and mosaics. They used an objective index (Simpson's index) to quantify diversity. This package resulted in a sophisticated approach to diagnosis but it was pointed out that there should perhaps be no prescriptive approach because HNV land use differs so much from one part of the European Union to another. [To read the full presentation, click here](#)



next steps >>>

How to move forward?

A few closing observations were drawn following the presentations and the discussions.

- The designation of HNV land use was approached differently in the Member States
- Recognition of the specificities of HNV land use in different regions
- Use of a variety of methods
- Need for a balance between accuracy and cost
- Necessity for "ground truthing" and "plausibility check"
- Land use systems are intrinsically highly variable and the high nature values are contingent on management as well as an objective set of biophysically based land use system variables

Some open questions remain...

- How to promote HNV land use? (Economic logic vs. improvement of HNV quality?)
- What about the ecosystem services principle? Rather than trying to solve a biodiversity problem in isolation, shouldn't we try and get other ecosystem services gains (e.g. in carbon sequestration and water quality enhancement)?

Read our Working Paper

