

GERMANY

Restoring, preserving and
enhancing ecosystems
related to agriculture and
forestry

Location

Schleswig-Holstein

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P4 – Ecosystems
management

Measure

M16 - Cooperation

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 3 750 000
EAFRD 2 700 000
National/Regional 675 000
Private 125 000
Other 250 000

Project duration

2014 – 2020

Project promoter

Ministry of Energy,
Agriculture, the
Environment and Rural
Areas

Contact

Dr. Berthold Pechan
[Berthold.pechan@melur.lan
dsh.de](mailto:Berthold.pechan@melur.lan
dsh.de)

EAFRD funding helped set up associations that bring together local stakeholders with diverse interests to manage the implementation of Natura 2000 conservation rules.

Summary

Implementing nature conservation rules in Natura 2000 sites can trigger conflicts of interest between land users and conservationists. In Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 'Local Actions' were set-up to bring local people from nature conservation, agriculture, tourism, business and society together to draw-up management plans for Natura 2000 areas.



Co-financed by the of Schleswig-Holstein rural development programme, they allow for a transparent, locally-designed approach to land management that helps conserve, restore and improve biodiversity.

Results

There are seven active Local Actions in Schleswig-Holstein and two more are already finalised.

Local Actions have taken over planning the management of 59 Natura 2000 sites covering 42 000 hectares - around 25 % of the Natura 2000 area in Schleswig-Holstein.

Local Actions have boosted acceptance of nature conservation, and improved the quality of life for locals by allowing them to get involved.

They are regarded as an exemplary approach for the co-operative implementation of Natura 2000.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Local Actions should not be a substitute for local authorities – they must work alongside authorities and NGOs.
- Local Actions are particularly effective in large, complex and intensively used areas.
- Setting up a Local Action requires much coordination between conservationists, municipalities, local land users, water protection, tourism and other interests.
- Coordination at the federal state level is important for initiating new Local Actions, and for coordinating between existing organisations.
- Accompanying public relations work is recommended.

Context

The implementation of nature conservation regulations is quite often associated with conflicts of interests and objectives between users and protectors. Possible conflicts between Natura 2000 targets and competing land claims should be identified and solved at an early stage. For this reason, the ministry for environment in Schleswig-Holstein decided to pursue a new cooperative and area based approach for the implementation of Natura 2000 – the European network of protected areas. Local Actions started under the rural development programme of Schleswig-Holstein 2007 – 2013.

Objectives

The aim of Local Actions is a consensus-oriented implementation of Natura 2000, which is broadly carried out independently by local players. Local Actions aim to develop Natura 2000 management plans in a transparent "bottom-up" process giving the people living and working in the region the opportunity to contribute to the protection of nature in their environment. Local people can help find amicable solutions that balance European nature conservation and competing land use claims.

Local Actions aim to bring together people from nature conservation, agriculture, tourism, business and society. They aim to implement nature conservation measures, alongside existing official and NGO organisations.

The overall objective of the Local Actions is to contribute to the conservation, restoration and development of biological diversity, especially in Natura 2000 sites.

Activities

Local actions are based on a supporting association which describes the social situation in a region. The task of the local actions is to enable the implementation of nature conservation measures, in addition to the existing official and NGO structures through locally agreed concepts. Local actions act as a service provider for the organization and coordination of nature conservation measures. In no case should they be a substitute of the authorities.

Funding is provided, if the local actions develop area-specific concepts for the implementation of Natura 2000, coordinate the projects with all the authorities involved, institutions and persons, and coordinate or implement the necessary measures. The establishment of a local action therefore requires considerable coordination in advance. Accompanying public relations work is also useful.



The various stakeholders and local actors can use the offer of support for a joint implementation of the objectives of nature conservation. Therefore institutions have to be set up, in which nature conservation, municipalities and land users and, where appropriate, other interests such as water protection and tourism are equally represented. Tasks of the Local Actions include:

- Designing area-specific Natura 2000 management plans.
- Coordinating the implementation of the plans with specialist authorities and interest groups.
- Informing, consulting and encouraging local citizens to participate.
- Public relations and environmental education work.

Since these tasks clearly go beyond a voluntary commitment and require professional management, Local Actions can be supported financially, based on the regional implementation directive "Regulation for the granting of the work of local alliances for the implementation of NATURA 2000 in Schleswig-Holstein".

According to the regional directive, the personnel costs of a full-time management as well as, where appropriate, assistance staff, rent and ancillary costs as well as costs for the initial establishment or expansion of the office (up to 5 000 EUR) are funded. The grant may be applied for a period of up to 5 years and is co-financed through the rural development programme.

In 2015 the funding directive was revised ("Regulation for the granting of donations for the work of cooperations in nature conservation (local actions) in Schleswig-Holstein") and forms the actual basis for the funding of Local Actions until 2020.

Local Actions also carry out and coordinate other projects for the implementation of Natura 2000. For example, the Aukrug Local Action has produced a comprehensive catalogue of funding possibilities for nature and species protection in the area for landowners and land users including 33 concrete measures.

<http://www.naturschutzring-aukrug.de/katalog>

Main Results

There are currently seven Local Actions active in Schleswig-Holstein and two more have been finalised.

Local Actions have taken over the management planning for 59 Natura 2000 sites covering around 42 000 hectares which is around 25 % of the total Natura 2000 land area in Schleswig-Holstein (157 000 ha).

Above all there are structures for a cooperative implementation of Natura 2000 on site in all Local Actions. The permanent presence and availability within the areas has created a trust base for a positive and prosperous coexistence.

The Local Actions were positively assessed in the mid-term as well as in the ex-post evaluation of the 2007 – 2013 period (see below) and are part of the new rural development program of Schleswig-Holstein (“Landesprogramm ländlicher Raum 2014 – 2020”) for the period 2014 – 2020.

In the ex-post evaluation for the period 2007-2013 the following central conclusions were drawn about Local Actions:

- Effects on biodiversity through the implementation of own measures
- Improving the acceptance of nature conservation
- Contributing to improving the quality of life through participation
- Synergy effects through coordinated implementation of Natura 2000 and the Water Framework Directive

Overall, the Local Actions were regarded as an exemplary approach for the co-operative implementation of Natura 2000 and as an important complement to regulatory nature conservation by the authorities.

Key lessons

Boller et al. (see below) have drawn the following conclusions for the practice from the Local Actions:

- Local Actions are highly appropriate for the anchoring of nature conservation objectives, for example Natura 2000, on site. Local Actions are particularly effective in large, complex and intensively used areas.
- Financial support of the initiatives encourages a professional way of working.
- Coordination at the federal state level (Schleswig-Holstein) is important for initiating new Local Actions and for coordinating between existing cooperations, as well as between the federal state level authorities and associations.
- Local Actions should not substitute the authorities.
- An important future task for cooperation lies in biodiversity advice, especially on farms.
- The establishment of a Local Action requires considerable coordination in advance.

Moreover, recommendations from the evaluation of Local Actions 2007 – 2013 suggest to:

- Maintain and expand the promotion of Local Actions
- Diversity of organisational structures and priorities
- Ensure the mentoring of Local Actions
- Administrative simplification (use of state resources in "critical areas" instead of EU funds).

Additional sources of information

www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/N/naturschutz/natschutz_allgem_05_Foerd_03_SH03.html

<http://schleswig-holstein.lpv.de/lokale-aktionen.html>

www.nna.niedersachsen.de/download/87785