

# Sustainable Land Use

## A Central Challenge for Society



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# The Challenges for (global) Land Use



Feeding 9 billion by 2050, with changing diets that add pressure on land use (**food** security), while

... managing **ecological**, **energy** and **social** risks by:

- conserving biodiversity and ecosystems services,
- adapting to and mitigating climate change,
- dealing with diminishing water supplies,
- controlling urban spread and soil depletion to keep e.g. flood control services,
- creating income and livelihoods, as well as
- reducing poverty and environmental inequality.

# Issues for Land Use – EU scale



- The EU should find a balanced approach to meet these global challenges ...
- while maintaining a diverse and resilient spatial pattern of both high- and low-intensity land use systems.

In addition, the EU has also two important targets for 2020:

- a particularly demanding biodiversity target for EU's biodiversity and ecosystems, as well as for the EU global biodiversity footprint;
- targets for renewables, which may lead to further competition for land use.

# A diversity of challenges at the MS, regional, local and individual land-user levels

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- in wealthier urban areas, allocating land either to built infrastructure or functioning ecosystems (delivering valuable services) is a fundamental trade off;
- in the most competitive agricultural areas, the simplification, intensification and expansion of land use patterns to virtually all land leave no space for nature and functioning ecosystems;
- in marginal areas, the challenge is supporting low-intensity land uses to keep functioning ecosystems which provide fire and flood control services, as well as habitat and cultural amenities.



# Sustainable land use

(trying a  
definition...)

**Sustainable land use** can be seen as a dynamic state of individual land mosaics that meets current local and global needs while keeping the potential to meet future needs.

- Sustainability of land-use decisions can only be assessed by considering the effects of land-use changes **across scales** (e.g. to avoid the “illusion of preservation”).
- Specific land uses should be assessed not in isolation, but **as part of mosaics** comprising diverse land uses, as well as “grey” and green infrastructure.



# Sustainable land use

(policy and  
governance  
issues)

- Systematic **market failure** in the delivery of ecosystem services with a public-good nature, justifying the need for public intervention **to provide the right incentives** to land users (PES, market creation, CAP, taxes...).
- The hidden influence of multiple EU policies on EU (and global) land use – a **policy-coordination problem** (“unseen Europe”) requiring a territorial perspective.
- The need for **landscape-level governance** mechanisms– landscape is a crucial scale where different land uses and users interact, most ecosystem services are produced, and many trade offs need to be assessed by multiple stakeholders (European Landscape Convention).

# Policy implications



## The EEAC:

- encourages the **EU and Member-states** to **address existing market failures in the delivery of public goods**, as regards, in particular, locally produced public goods that are regionally or globally consumed (clean water, carbon or biodiversity), for which local people bear the costs but are unable to capture the benefits;
- proposes **EU legislation** to be **more focused on sustainable land use** as an overarching goal, by considering the relevant natural resources in an integrated way and encouraging Member-states to use existing opportunities to promote sustainable land use;

# Policy implications



- the **unintended spatial consequences of EU policy** developments should be **actively assessed**, which requires a **territorial perspective** at the EU level – this is a crucial step towards sustainable land use across Europe;
- **reducing the European carbon, water and biodiversity footprint outside Europe**, as well as unintended global-land-use consequences of EU policies, is crucial to achieve sustainable land use globally;
- **CAP reform** is an excellent **opportunity** to provide the **right incentives** for land users to deliver ecosystem public goods – a huge challenge across the EU, requiring a **strong** but **reformed CAP**, which would reward farming and forestry systems according to the public goods delivered, while keeping transaction costs low to get effective results.

# Policy implications



- **global market failure** related to the public-good nature of many ecosystem services (carbon, biodiversity, regional rainfall) needs also to be **recognized** as a valid non-trade concern within the WTO negotiations, as a precondition for an **efficient** and **fair** expansion of world trade;
- **landscape-level governance** mechanisms should be developed, to take advantage of a governance scale where different land uses and land users interact, most ecosystem services are produced and many trade offs need to be assessed by multiple stakeholders.
- these mechanisms can be induced e.g. by requiring that landscape partnerships are created before application for particular public funds (some agri-environmental schemes).

# Policy implications



- **EU-wide pilot schemes** as part of a coherent network for connecting landscapes of significant cultural or natural value might constitute a first step towards a sustainable landscape management policy framework.

## **Conclusion:**

**sustainable land use** constitutes a powerful integrative area for multiple, crucial sustainability issues; and should thus form **one of the main topics** to be taken forward within the context **of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.**