

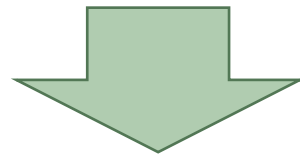
Recommendations from the “LIFE Viva Grass” project: applying the ES approach in rural development plans and spatial planning practices

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LIFE Viva Grass approach in collection of knowledge and experience

- Analysis of the Baltic policy documents and legal framework impacting grassland management and ecosystems
- Evaluation of past experiences and current practices in grassland management: different management models & good practice examples from the Baltic States and other EU countries
- Development of the Viva Grass tool and testing of it in the project pilot areas, stakeholder involvement & training course
- Demonstration of grassland restoration and business catalytic activities in the project pilot areas



Development of the policy recommendations



LIFE Viva Grass recommendations

Related to the project objectives & tasks:

to support **maintenance of grassland biodiversity and ecosystem services**

to foster **ecosystem-based planning and land management**

to promote **application of the integrated planning tool** into daily processes of public administration at national, regional and municipality level





Recommendations to support maintenance of grassland biodiversity and ecosystem services

Recommendation: Cross-sectoral coordination in policy development should be improved in order to avoid conflicting policy objectives or measures

Solutions:

- **Policy development:** ES approach as a holistic concept should be applied in policy development, starting from horizontal strategic long-term policy documents up to single sector policies and programmes.
- **Data management:** To support cooperation among sectors more flexible access to farming data (e.g. IACS) and nature conservation databases should be provided
- **Baltic collaboration:** establishing a collaboration platform for nature conservation authorities in the Baltic States to facilitate information exchange and a common position on environmental targets



Recommendation: Rural support policy should integrate the ecosystem service concept to ensure compliance with environmental & biodiversity objectives

Solutions:

- **Increasing multi-functionality of agricultural land:** targeting of agri-environmental schemes to support ES supply, e.g. maintenance of habitats + climate control, flood prevention, erosion control etc.
- **Considering the public benefits when calculating the payments for measures:** ES value (public benefits) should be included in calculations of the support level.
- **Territorial approach:** the target areas of the interventions should be defined based on precise criteria, e.g. species and habitat distribution, pressures, as well as agro-ecological conditions which determine the ES supply capacity.

The Viva Grass tool can be used for targeting the agri-environmental measures to areas with suitable agro-ecological conditions or the highest potential in an ES supply (e.g. hot-spot & cold-spot analysis).



Recommendation: Land use change should be avoided in grasslands with high biological value and ecosystem service potential

Solutions:

- **Competitive support conditions** for the maintenance of semi-natural grasslands compared to other land uses.
- **Legal constraints for transformation of grassland into other land uses** - decision on land use change should take into account biodiversity and ES value.
- **Better coordination of the national data sets** on distribution and status of semi-natural grasslands and agricultural land use to support local authorities in land use planning and decision-making on land transformation.

The Viva Grass tool can be used to identify so called ‘hot-spot’ areas, where transformation of grasslands into other land use should be avoided. A map of identified plots can be produced as a Viva Grass data product





Recommendations to promote ecosystem-based planning and land management

Recommendation: The ES approach should be integrated into spatial planning for enhancing environmental considerations and delivery of ecosystem services, as well as reducing undesirable trade-offs

Solutions:

- **National scale ES mapping** should be carried out/finalised to provide an input to spatial planning, rural development and other land-use related policies.
- **Adjustment of the national legal framework** for spatial planning and nature conservation planning in order to operationalise the ES concept
- **Applying the ES mapping and assessment** information in spatial planning process:
 - Analysis of the existing situation: e.g. identification of areas of high/ low ES supply
 - Development of planning solutions: e.g. scenarios, trade-off analysis, prioritisation
 - Assessment of planning solutions: e.g. SEA, monitoring impacts of planning solutions

The Viva Grass tool contributes to national scale ES mapping by providing a framework and methodology for expert-based assessment of agro-ecosystem services; functionalities of the tool applicable in spatial planning: hot/cold spot analysis, prioritisation, classification etc.



Recommendation: Suitable approaches for integration of the ES concept at different planning levels and contexts should be developed and demonstrated to planners and policy-makers

Solutions:

- **Guidelines on application of the ES approach in spatial planning** should be developed, identifying the planning level & context specific issues where ES information can support decision-making, as well as suggesting suitable methods
- **Pilot case studies on application of the ES approach** at different planning levels and contexts should be initiated by planning authorities or projects
- **Experience exchange among ES experts and planners** should be promoted at national as well as international level (e.g. by Baltic chapter of the Ecosystem Service Partnership).
 - **Viva Grass Viewer** offers an easy-to-use decision-making support tool for ES based land use planning at local scale, as well as input for spatial planning at municipality or regional scale.
 - **Viva Grass Planner** can support the spatial planning process at municipality or regional (and national) scale by prioritisation and classification of areas based on criteria selected by planners, decision-makers or stakeholders



Potential issues where ES could be applied at different planning levels

Planning level/context	Possible application of ES concept/questions addressed
National level strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of national policy implementation Trade-off analysis of development alternatives Defining national policy targets Defining target areas for rural support interventions
Regional level strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of alternative development scenarios Green infrastructure planning
Municipality level strategic & physical planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining land use priorities and zoning Assessment of alternative development scenarios
Municipality level thematic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape planning Green infrastructure planning Nature-based solutions
Protected area planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional zoning of protected areas Management planning and prioritisation Socio-economic assessment of nature conservation measures
Local level planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use planning Nature-based solutions



Recommendation: The ecosystem service approach should be promoted in the planning of **landscape maintenance and restoration**

Solutions:

- **Assessment of landscape value** by using ES framework.
- **Planning of landscape management:** ES supply potential can be used to prioritise areas for landscape maintenance and restoration
- **Stakeholder engagement in landscape planning:** participatory methods for ES mapping and assessment can be used to collect local knowledge and preferences
- **Implementation of landscape management measures:** support of the Rural Development Programmes required

Viva Grass Planner provides decision-making support in planning of landscape maintenance and restoration by prioritisation of areas based on ES supply & risk factors related to landscape (tested in the case study area - Cēsis municipality, Latvia).



Recommendation: The ecosystem service approach should be applied in **green infrastructure planning**

Solutions:

- **Mapping of existing GI:** Spatially explicit information on ES supply & ‘hot-spot’ analysis can be used for delineation of core areas and other GI-forming elements
- **Identification of problem areas:** ES mapping results and ‘cold-spot’ analysis can help to identify problem areas where improvement of GI are needed
- **Development of scenarios for GI improvement:** using information on ES supply potential for prioritisation of areas for GI improvement
- **Implementation of Nature Based Solutions** by utilisation of ecological processes underpinning ES supply

Viva Grass Planner provides decision-making support in planning of a green network, by prioritisation of grassland areas to be included in a green network based on ES supply (tested in case study area – Saaremaa Island, Estonia).



Recommendation: The ecosystem service approach should be applied as a basis of **protected area management**

Solutions:

- **Prioritisation of areas for restoration or management measures & Functional zoning of protected areas** based on ES supply potential in combination with other data on nature conservation value
- **Assessment of the socio-economic value:** ES concept as new framework for assessment of public benefits and impacts of nature conservation measures
- **Assessment of current land use** effectiveness to provide ES needed to ensure conservation of the nature values & targeting measures to reach goals of PA

Viva Grass Planner provides decision-making support in management planning of protected areas, by prioritising areas using specific indicators and ES value (tested in case study area – Dubysa regional park, Lithuania).





Recommendations to promote application of the integrated planning tool into the daily processes of public administration at national, regional and municipality level

Recommendation: The Viva Grass tool should be interlinked with existing online national data systems for spatial planning and extended to other ecosystems

Solutions:

- **Possible options for maintaining the Viva Grass tool:**
 - Regular updating of the data sets, e.g. by acquisition of the data from IACS and other data systems of the national competent authorities;
 - Using the Viva Grass Link to connect to the existing national online data systems/portals;
 - Integration of the Viva Grass data products and/or ES assessment matrix and decision-making support algorithms within the existing data systems/portals of the public authorities
- **Extension of the tool to other ecosystems** – upgrading of the Viva Grass ES assessment matrix and data sets
- **Development of new national ES assessment tools** by using Viva Grass methodology & framework for ES assessment and land uses planning decision support



Thank you!



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