

# GUIDELINES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## SHAPING THE FUTURE IN RURAL AREAS TOGETHER

A reference framework for sustainable development  
of rural areas



Bund-Länder-Task Force

**ARGE**  
**LANDENTWICKLUNG**

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**Bund - Länder - Task Force for  
Sustainable Rural Development**

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These guidelines update the 1997 guidelines of the ArgeLandentwicklung, a working group set up by the Conference of Agriculture Ministers.

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## Foreword



**Dear Readers,**

The working group of rural development (ArgeLandentwicklung) is supported by the ministries of the federal government and state governments responsible for rural development.

One of its essential tasks is to compile basic material and provide guideline data relating to rural development. Furthermore, it should also give recommendations for the groundwork, planning and implementation of rural development projects.

The now updated rural development guidelines are a result of this mandate. As before, they bear the subtitle "Shaping the future in rural areas together". This creates a reference to the challenge of the constitution as well as to the members of the ArgeLandentwicklung working group and the various other stakeholders of rural development such as the associations for rural development, other associations, alliances, the local authorities and even scientific and educational establishments to champion equal living conditions in all regions of our country.

The guidelines take up, on the one hand, current topics in rural development, such as the matter of a fair consideration of the interests between economic land use and nature and environment protection, the challenges of demographic change, the creation of infrastructures, including digital ones, specifically tailored to suit requirements, and the limiting of land use in rural areas.

On the other hand, however, they are also based on the experience of the stakeholders in the rural areas. The existing, proven instruments of rural development in particular continue to be taken into account.

The predecessor of the ArgeLandentwicklung working group, the working group of the land consolidation authorities of the federal states of the Federal Republic of Germany, published a programmatic thesis entitled "Land consolidation in the context of changing agricultural and environmental framework conditions" as early as in 1987.

In the context of altered agricultural and environmental framework conditions (including taking the impacts of German reunification in account), this paper was updated and republished as the "Guidelines for rural development" in

1997. The guidelines attracted a great deal of interest from the various partners that endeavour to develop rural areas.

In the light of the new challenges associated with regional and integrated development, it has become necessary to update and adapt the guidelines. One should not wait until the new EU funding period after 2013. On the one hand, one cannot expect that that will give rise to any significant impact on the contents of the guidelines. And on the other hand, in many rural regions, the issues arising from the new challenges are so pressing that a response had to be made to them.

Accordingly, the ArgeLandentwicklung working group was charged by the Conference of Agriculture Ministers with updating the guidelines by the autumn of 2011. You are now holding the result in your hands.

The revised guidelines are intended to be a reference framework for rural development authorities. In addition, they are intended to provide impetuses to the various other stakeholders involved in rural development.

The processes initiated through the application of the guidelines are taken up and supported further by the ArgeLandentwicklung working group.

Finally, I would like to thank all those involved in updating this crucial paper, particularly the crucial stakeholders from the "fundamental issues" working group of the ArgeLandentwicklung working group, but especially Professor Lorig from Mainz, who coordinated and decisively contributed to the drafting of the guidelines with a high degree of personal and professional commitment. I would also like to thank the experts from various areas of society who are involved in or affected by rural development for their comprehensive and constructive discussion and support in the process of drafting the guidelines. They have made a significant contribution to the successful conclusion of the work.

I hope that reading this paper will give you lots of new impetuses and ideas for rural areas that are fit for the future and suggestions as to how to achieve them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jürgen Buchwald', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr Jürgen Buchwald

Chair

## Guidelines of rural development

The main objective of rural development is to ensure the equality of the living conditions for the rural areas in Germany in the long term, in particular in the current climate of globalisation and demographic change.

That is why buttressing the regional resources of the rural areas with the support of active citizen participation, supporting of the maintenance and creation of sources of income in rural areas, safeguarding the future of rural communities and supporting the sustainable use of land lie at the heart of future-oriented rural development.

With its instruments, rural development supports rural areas in line with the provisions of these guidelines, especially in accordance with the following guiding principles.

### **Maintaining rural areas as working areas for agriculture and forestry and boosting economic employment**

- Rural development lastingly supports the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry and supplements structural change with regard to the goal of sustainable land use reforms.
- Rural development supports diversification, regional net value added and initiatives for a power supply that uses renewable sources of energy.
- Rural development boosts infrastructures by means of broadband provision and by safeguarding and creating local roads and farm roads specifically tailored to suit requirements.
- Rural development contributes towards maintaining assets in rural areas.
- The integration of all land development instruments improves the general conditions for firms and founders of new businesses, including those in the non-agricultural sector, contributes to improved income opportunities in rural areas and encourages companies to locate to the area.

### **Promoting regional and community development**

- Integrated rural development promotes projects of intercommunal cooperation and rises to the challenges of demographic development including the associated processes of shrinkage.
- The planning and control instruments of ILEK (Integriertes ländliches Entwicklungskonzept – Integrated Rural Development Concept) and ILE-Regionalmanagement (Integrated Rural Development Regional Management) as well as the LEADER approach are used to boost regional identity and the learning partnership as well as for the processes of change management. These bottom-up approaches in conjunction with public-private organisational structures boost the initiative and personal responsibility of the local population with regard to regional development.



- The redevelopment of villages, together with the safeguarding of basic services, is a central task of rural development. Development concepts assist the making of the necessary decisions regarding investment.
- Village development and the rural reorganisation of land holdings support the implementation of infrastructure measures, village redevelopment and rural tourism.

### **Conserving and developing the basis of life and the cultural legacy**

- The rural reorganisation of land holdings facilitates joint solutions for projects that require space. It supports, for example, the development of inter-state networks of interlinked biotopes, interlinked nature conservation networks, land use that is in keeping with the landscape and locality with the preservation of grassland, near-natural surface water development or extensive flood protection measures.
- Rural development contributes towards climate protection and its instruments support the requisite measures of adjustment.
- Rural development contributes towards sustainable development in terms of Agenda 21, supports biodiversity strategies in terms of safeguarding and developing the diversity of species, habitats as well as genetic resources and supports the creation of closed cycles of materials.
- Rural reorganisation of land holdings facilitates the implementation of eco-pools, eco-accounts and compensation payment projects on the basis of nature protection planning.
- The rural reorganisation of land holdings and land-use management make a sustainable contribution towards the fast expansion of renewable energy.
- The rural reorganisation of land holdings and land-use management contribute towards reducing the amount of land used and resolving conflicts of use.

## I.

### **A reference framework for rural development**

The framework conditions for life and work in rural areas that apply to everyone in such areas are changing fast. The globalisation of the world markets, the influence of the European Union on national structural policies, the associated general structural change in rural areas, the demographic changes and the "new challenges" (such as climate change, water management, protection of biodiversity and the increased use of renewable energy) have various impacts on the development of rural areas in Germany.

Against this background, there is also the mandate of developing rural development further. In rural areas, it is important

- to boost economic potential, preserve existing jobs and create new jobs,
- to improve the living conditions of the people in the rural areas further,
- to promote regional and community development,
- to protect natural resources in the long term,
- to support agriculture and forestry and the associated cooperative activities as well as the areas upstream and downstream of the agriculture and forestry industries in rural areas.

In all this, the opportunities offered by the demographic change must be harnessed for the processes of development.

Rural areas can best be developed with the collaboration of and cooperation of all stakeholders in the region in question. For this purpose, methods and instruments have evolved and proven to be effective during the preceding years. The land development authority and the private bodies are strong partners of the communities. They ensure the active participation of the citizens and take into account the interests of agriculture, forestry and nature conservation. They promote the attractiveness of the rural areas as autonomous places for living and economic activity and secure their role as natural, cultural and recreational areas. The interactions between town and country are respected and developed for mutual benefit.

The following instruments that have proven to be effective are to be used for this purpose:

- ILEK/Regional Management/LEADER for the drafting, support and implementation of regional development strategies,
- the process of reorganising land holdings according to the Land Consolidation Act in order to reorganise the ownership structures and property situations as well as to resolve conflicts of land use.
- the process of reorganising land holdings according to the Agricultural Adjustment Act in order to determine and reorganise ownership structures,
- voluntary exchange of use and comparable measures to optimise land use,

- village development and
- special programmes for modern infrastructures.

Thanks to their agro-structural reference, these instruments are closely integrated in the catalogue of measures of the joint task of "improving the agricultural structure and coastal protection" in which they also find extensive financial support.

The "***Guidelines for rural development – shaping the future in rural areas together***" are intended to give citizens and everyone in politics, administration and institutions that bears responsibility for the sustainable development of rural areas a reference framework to do so. They are intended to explain how sustainable and lasting development can be effectively promoted on the initiative of the regions and with the involvement of all stakeholders.

## **II.**

### **An up-to-date definition of the responsibilities and mandate of rural development**

#### **Giving a boost to economic potential and employment**

Buttressing the economic strength of rural areas and securing and creating jobs are decisive for the development of rural areas. This requires:

- efficient and competitive, market-oriented and environmentally compatible agricultural and forestry industries,
- offering a new range of services, particularly in relation to the changes triggered by demographic change.
- an attractive, family-friendly and age-appropriate living and working environment,
- placing a high value on the environment, leisure and culture.

It is clear that those regions that can best face up to the altered framework conditions are those in which self-sustaining economic and financial cycles develop.

#### **Promoting regional development, making villages fit for the future**

Strong communities with committed citizens are a significant precondition for the development of attractive rural areas as places for living and working in. The promotion of rural areas and their villages must, therefore, emphasize measures that help communities to carry out their tasks independently and to adjust to demographic changes.

Safeguarding the basic services of the local population with infrastructural facilities and services in order to preserve the vitality of the villages even under the new framework conditions must be the focus of the promotion. In doing so, active, intercommunal solutions and multi-functional uses of the infrastructural facilities must be tackled.

In order to improve site quality and the living conditions in rural areas, the following objectives must be urgently implemented:

- Local and regional decision-making powers and the personal responsibility of the citizens must be strengthened. Funding measures and funding activities are to be observed and agreed upon in, where required, the regional, cross-community context.
- Community spirit, community life and "village culture" are to be promoted as a significant driving force for autonomous development.
- Sustainable housing development is to be promoted by giving priority to re-development (i.e. on brownfield sites), the re-use of unused sites and the

preservation of the buildings that give the village its unique character by converting and renovating them.

- A rural infrastructure that is specifically tailored to suit requirements and demographic development must be supported.
- The measures should be geared towards protecting the natural basis of life, preserving the cultural heritage and making positive contributions to net value added in rural areas.

Integrated rural development concepts (ILEK) or LEADER initiatives, but also instruments that reorganise land holdings can significantly promote these local or regional activities. They develop the strengths of the citizens themselves and foster a strong sense of identification with the region.

## **Updating local and regional infrastructures**

Rural areas need efficient transport infrastructures and communication structures to form the basis of all self-supporting development. People, goods and services require up-to-date local and regional infrastructures. As a rule, these measures must be planned and carried out in a cross-community way.

For the planning phase, the land development authority should offer the integrated rural development concept which allows the relevant business and social partners – with the close involvement of the citizens – to identify the need in a strength-weakness analysis and to integrate this need into a feasible plan of action.

The implementation of infrastructural measures can be supported by cross-community regional management or in a LEADER process. If use has to be made of plots of land, instruments relating to the reorganisation of land holdings are available. In addition, rural development can combine them with third party funds but also use its own funds.

## **Making agriculture fit for the future**

The central challenges for agriculture arise from the development of the markets, the continuous structural adjustments in the agri-food industry as well as the need to fulfil the social expectations both with regard to the production of superior and reasonably priced food as well as with regard to objectives pertaining to environmental and nature protection, animal welfare and consumer protection.

Agriculture continues to be an important local economic factor in the rural areas. Jobs in agriculture as well as in the growing of fruit and vegetables and viticulture are not transferrable. Together with forestry, it is the only economic sector that extensively guarantees the care, preservation and development of the cultural landscape.

In addition, agriculture makes important contributions to securing the supply of energy and to climate protection through its production of renewable energy

using biomass. On the other hand, agriculture must deal with the consequences of climate change and develop adaptation strategies.

All this presupposes competitive agricultural enterprises with attractive and innovative jobs. This should be safeguarded for the future, too, by making use of rural development instruments.

- In accordance with their location, shape and size, cultivated areas have to be adapted to the economic requirements resulting from continuing structural change in agriculture and must be developed in an environmentally compatible way by means of a suitable network of roads and water bodies.
- The restructuring process must support the participation of the farmers in area-related funding programmes.
- The reorganisation of land holdings and land management must ensure that no conflicts of land use arise. In this respect, steps should be taken to ensure that the use of agricultural areas by third parties is minimised and that it is regulated in an agriculturally compatible way.
- Gains in productivity and time can generate scope for developing non-agricultural activities and alternative sources of income.
- In addition to direct marketing, tourism and maintenance work as regards nature and landscape conservation, new ranges of services within the framework of village development must be provided.

The process of reorganising land holdings has to be applied in a way that is appropriate to the situation and requirements, i.e. according to the principle of proportionality. They must be handled flexibly and executed as fast as possible. By voluntarily exchanging the use of land or voluntarily exchanging plots of land, sub-goals of wide-ranging measures relating to the reorganisation of land holdings can, in many cases, be achieved.

But it is not just a matter of people whose main economic activity is farming. To a large degree, rural areas and cultural landscapes are also shaped to by part-time farming. Areas that are less attractive from an agri-economic viewpoint but which often have a high value as far as landscape is concerned are to be taken into consideration. Future generations of part-time farmers and those wishing to gain a little additional income from farming will only want to or be able to continue farming and looking after these areas if the general working conditions at least cover costs. The fields and meadows that have been adapted to and assigned to the cultural landscape also ensure that the future generation of landowners in the rural area obtain an appreciable added value from their property.

## **Supporting forestry, putting in order and developing woodland areas**

The different demands made on forests require a permanent weighing up of economic and ecological interests in order to achieve sustainable forest management. The forest is not just a source of raw materials but also a basis for



species, soil, climate and water protection as well as for meeting the leisure and recreational needs of the local population.

Sustainable forest management presupposes an ordered structure of property, development that is specifically tailored to suit requirements and the resolution of existing conflicts of use. This is done most effectively by means of the instrument of "forest consolidation".

- This solves competing uses between business and ecological interests.
- Development measures can make private stocks of timber available and facilitate economic exploitation.
- Forest consolidation also results in cost-effective plots of land whose shapes are more practical; these plots of land are adjusted to suit the topography as well as the various stocks of timber. This facilitates mixed forests of trees at different stages of life which enjoy natural regeneration.
- New roadways and logging trails as well as storage areas for timber result in a more profitable use of timber stocks, which saves, in particular, time spent taking care of, thinning and commercial exploitation of the stocks.
- Forest consolidation supports forest transformation and the continuous removal of timber. The rejuvenation that ensues causes further carbon sequestration. Thus a managed forest contributes to climate protection as it is a carbon sink. Greater use of woods, especially small private woods, is, therefore, to be supported from the perspective of climate protection but also from the perspective of the forest transformation that is needed to protect the forest itself from climate change.
- Forest consolidation should contribute towards developing and protecting new forest borders. These areas that are particularly ecologically valuable can be allocated to communities that would like to stockpile compensation areas as part of an eco-account.
- The services of the forest with regard to its economic, protective and recreational function presuppose regular maintenance work, production that is secure in the long term and an exploitation of forest areas according to the latest economic and scientific findings relating to forestry. The slogan that has been used in forestry science for decades "no roads, no conservation" is more valid now than ever before. In order to be able to carry out forestry management work and thinning, an appropriate road network must be created.
- Forest consolidation is intended to remove any overgrowth, particularly from brook valleys. The safeguarding and reintroduction of extensive management and the opening up of the landscape by the removal of undesirable or non-indigenous spruce plantations can be done as part of a process of forest consolidation.
- Water can be retained over a large area depending on the way the existing and newly created hollows in the forest are organised.

## **Securing sustainable protection of the natural basis of life**

Rural development puts into effect measures to protect the natural basis of life and resources. It pursues the national sustainability strategy of the Federal Government and sees itself as being faithful to the principles of climate protection.

ILEK, regional management, LEADER, the reorganisation of land holdings as well as village development are highly suitable for implementing the principle of sustainability as stipulated in Agenda 21. They give equal consideration to economic, ecological, social and cultural aspects. In suitable cases, rural development instruments can achieve the protection targets in the fields of environmental protection, nature protection and landscape management and, at the same time, settle conflicts arising from the interests of the owners or users affected. This work will involve, in particular, the following goals:

- Rural development contributes towards sustainable development in terms of Agenda 21, supports biodiversity strategies in terms of safeguarding and developing the diversity of species, habitats as well as genetic resources and supports the creation of closed cycles of materials.
- Rural development should contribute to climate protection and, with its instruments, support the necessary measures of adaptation.
- Landscape plans must be applied, e.g. by making land available and the reorganisation of land holdings. Biotope networks must be developed, e.g. by preserving and interlinking near-natural areas.
- The goals of the European Water Framework Directive are to be executed by means of water management concepts. Areas for water retention must be provided. Soil and water conservation must be supported. Drinking water protection areas must be safeguarded.
- Ecological improvements in the village and open country must be carried out, e.g. by means of plantings, the desealing of land or the renaturation of bodies of water. Countervailing and compensating measures according to nature conservation law are to be implemented at suitable points in a way that is compatible with ownership.
- Village redevelopment is to be promoted. Empty sites and other free areas in villages are to be made available to people wanting to build in order to avoid having to give planning permission in areas outside the village.
- Soil is a non-reproducible resource and the basis of life for humans, animals and plants and must, therefore, be protected in the long term. The risk of erosion on areas used for farming must be avoided above all, e.g. by facilitating a different ploughing direction.
- The rural reorganisation of land holdings facilitates the implementation of ecopools, eco-accounts and compensation payment projects on the basis of nature protection planning.

- The rural reorganisation of land holdings and land-use management make a sustainable contribution towards the fast expansion of renewable energy.
- The rural reorganisation of land holdings and land management should contribute towards reducing the amount of land used and solve conflicts of use.

This complex and demanding canon of tasks is an assignment conferred on rural development and the stakeholders involved in it. The standards for the fulfilment of the tasks are to be derived from them.

## **Conserving the cultural legacy**

The task of management leads to changes in the landscape that are mainly characterised by overgrowth. The consequences could be a change in the microclimate or the loss of valuable species. Rural development can support the following goals to preserve the cultural legacy:

- Cultural landscapes must be conserved, e.g. by continuing extensive land management.
- The cultural legacy of cultural landscapes, such as viticulture and fruit-growing, hedges and rows of trees, farmyards and vineyards, castle buildings, palaces and chapels must be conserved.

## **Promoting rural tourism**

For more and more tourists, natural experiences and the recreational function of the landscape play an important role when it comes to choosing the destination of their day trip or holiday. That is why landscapes should be developed carefully and in a way that shapes it beneficially. For example, combining the preservation of orchard meadows with the designation of nature trails intensifies visitors' experience of nature and enhances their interest in the landscape in question.

New road networks that not only serve the development of agricultural structures can create an additional tourist attraction for cyclists, inline skaters, Nordic walkers, walkers and ramblers.

Overall, land management should be linked to the preservation and improvement of the quality of the locality in order to fully develop the potential to create added value in a region by way of tourism.

Integrated rural development and LEADER processes make considerable contributions to rural tourism and support new regional identities.

## **Making better use of the benefits of integrated and sustainable rural development**

Favourable prerequisites for development can only be created if individual projects are combined to form a cross-community and interdisciplinary development approach. That is why integrated and sustainable land development means:

- Adjusting plans of action to the local/regional needs and opportunities of the people,
- Planning measures in a flexible and transparent way,
- Carrying out measures quickly and efficiently,
- Bundling instruments and funds,
- Designing processes and results in such a way that they continue to exist way beyond the funded period (safeguarding sustainability).

Measures of agricultural structural policy should, therefore, be closely linked to the regional economic and transport policy, environmental policy and employment, social and educational policy to form a regional strategy concept. Only with such an integrated "policy that forms a uniform and integrated whole" can one expect successes in rural development and for the rural areas in the long term.

Rural regions and communities that make extensive use of this integrated development approach of the instruments of rural development have – as comparative studies have shown – a developmental head start and thus an economic advantage over other communities. That is why rural development instruments should be specifically used in addition to and in conjunction with other alternatives to develop rural areas and their villages in order to be more successful when competing for investment, new firms and jobs.

## **Providing support for enacting planning decisions**

A multitude of plans on different levels and from various disciplines is concerned with rural areas. Owing to its integrated and cross-community approach, land development instruments in particular can be used for this purpose in a process that works in partnership with authorities, other institutions and citizens in order to harmonise plans and, above all, to carry them out with consensus. Rural development instruments are particularly suitable for the following areas:

- When effecting major public projects requiring land, rural development instruments must be used to achieve an integration of these infrastructures into the set of interactions of rural areas in a way that is compatible with ownership, social and environmental issues. In order, for example, to minimise the adverse impacts of major transport projects on the structure of the landscape, the interests of the landowners affected must be safeguarded and the impacts pursued by the project optimised.
- With the assistance of rural development instruments, competing sectorial plans, e.g. of transport, water management, agriculture and forestry or nature conservation, can be harmonised and carried out with consensus.
- Rural development is an offer to communities to redevelop villages. Community plans for village development, adaptation to redevelopment within the village, to the renaturation and desealing of public and private areas

can be effectively flanked by an accompanying reorganisation of land holdings.

- Rural development supports structural change in farming, improves production and working conditions in farming and forestry and adapts the rural infrastructure, especially the road network, to the circumstances at hand. Innovative, regionally coordinated solutions make rural road networks sustainable.
- Rural development instruments support the state and community measures to implement the specifications of the European Council Directives in the areas of nature, water and land by solving or at least minimising the conflicts with owners and land users arising from them.

An integrated rural development concept (ILEK) is particularly suitable for preparing regional and community development activities. The interlocking of plans and development measures becomes recognizable and their interactions can be appraised in a more accurate way.

### **III.**

## **Readjusting rural development instruments**

The instruments of rural development have been developed over many decades and have been continually adjusted to suit the needs of society. In order to achieve sustainable rural development, the instruments represented below must be used individually or as an expedient package in a way that is flexible, needs-oriented and situation-specific. However, urban development and integrated rural development should also be deliberately linked together.

### **A change in people's mindset**

A change in the way of acting presupposes a change in the way of thinking. Development arises from visions, not from the current set of problems. If visions are developed in the rural areas, then this can stimulate a lot of creativity which gives rise to ideas one would never have thought of if one had only focused on the problems (e.g. of demographic change and the associated shrinkage). This means that someone has to must lead the way and realistically demonstrate the visions. This person must appeal to the emotions of the people in the rural areas in a way that is stronger than has been the case to date. These "mover and shakers" should work locally and bring about a change in people's awareness. They should also initiate concrete activities.

Successes with these activities have to be made visible in the short term. What has been achieved becomes a motor for the process. It has to be based on change and visions. It has to contain a double strategy of action: counter-acting and adapting to the processes of shrinkage. Every project has to have an effect.

### **ILEK – paving the way for integrated rural development**

The ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept) forms the basis of strategy and planning for successful development processes in the regions. Along with qualified, external advisors, regional stakeholders will draw up customized strategies and concepts for the effective further development of their regions. In the process, the following questions for the specific regions will be answered:

- Strengths-weaknesses analysis: what do the regional starting positions for the further development and the enhancing of the regional net value added look like?
- Region-specific project portfolio: what areas of development and project ideas that promise success can be derived from the regional strengths and opportunities?
- Formation of effective project teams and attraction of project promoters: which key persons get involved in the project topics and spheres of action?



- Professional project management and initial project implementations: how can a successful project implementation succeed and what projects and practical measures can already be started up?
- Creation of a new movement or initiative in the region: how will the population in question be integrated into the discourse regarding regional development?

The result is the formation of guiding principles and future strategies with cross-community spheres of action for intercommunal cooperation.

The ILEK must also review the use of further instruments of rural development and, if need be, set them up. The integrated development approach builds on the goals and specifications of rural development planning and regional planning and the joint responsibility of the communities.

The use of rural development instruments and the coordination and bundling of other funding instruments are intended to trigger forceful surges in development for the regions in Germany. That is why these regional development approaches and intercommunal activities are to be stabilised by the regular updating of the ILEK in question.

## **ILE regional management – moderation and implementation**

With regard to the ILE (Integrated Rural Development) regional management, the practical enactment of the projects which were mostly prepared in the ILEK (Integrated Rural Development Concept) are at the forefront. Regional management is a service outside the public administration to initiate, organise and support the implementation of region-specific development strategies and is an important link between the regional stakeholders and the public administrations. It aims at directly supporting these activities in its role of a creative force, advisor, moderator and promoter. Regional management is designed in a cross-departmental (business, environment, social, culture, etc.) way. The ILE regional management is intended to activate the population as well as to initiate practical and result-oriented actions in the regions. Regional management can undertake the execution of individual projects in the form of project management. The most important tasks of regional management consist of providing stimuli, planning and administering the resources available, leading negotiations and moderating the decision-making processes.

## **LEADER – the interaction of regional actors and the expression of regional responsibility**

LEADER stands for "Links between Actions of Rural Development" and is one of the EU's important instruments of rural development policy. LEADER encourages stakeholders in rural areas to explore new avenues in order to become or remain competitive and to master the current challenges they face.

The basic understanding of LEADER is characterised by the guiding principle of the activating state. It assumes that initiative and the implementation of rural processes of change and their planning are done and sustained by the citizens themselves. Such a transfer of responsibility can only be done on the basis of consensual solutions and cooperative strategies. They should identify all regional challenges and take into account concrete approaches of action.

Within the framework of an open competition, regional communities of responsibility consisting of public and private stakeholders, so-called "local action groups" (LAGs), are selected that, equipped with decision-making powers and funding, are intended to act as sources of inspiration for rural development. With the recognition of area-based local development strategies, the path is free for local action groups to support and steer development in their region on the basis of their development strategy.

This "bottom-up" regional development aims at getting stakeholders to decide on the need for action and their lead projects themselves. The LEADER concept is characterised by

- a regional and cross-sector "bottom-up" approach,
- a private-public community of responsibility (local action group – LAG); at least 50% of the members of this LAG must consist of business and social partners
- the use of public means based on an area-specific integrated development strategy and a decision made by the LAG,
- regional management that gives the LAG full-time and professional support.
- giving priority to innovative and cross-territorial approaches.

The value added of LEADER lies in boosting regional identity, a partnership between public and private institutions both within the LEADER territory as well as with other regions from which all stakeholders continuously learn.

## **Development of villages and small towns as a process**

When taken to mean a development process, integrated rural development realizes the development potentials of the villages and small towns in rural areas. In the process, what is looked into is how they can be maintained and developed further as independent settlement units. Even in the phase of analysis, a holistic approach is pursued which takes all areas of life into consideration. In the process, the citizens are involved primarily as "local experts". This ensures that the subsequent application of the village development concept or the urban development concept is done in a way that is needs-oriented and in line with local circumstances. This encourages the citizens to identify with "their village" and ensures acceptance.

In the heart of many villages or small towns in rural areas, there is an increase in the number empty and unused residential buildings and bars, houses in need of modernisation as well as gaps between buildings and brownfield sites

in villages. In order to stabilise the inner zones of these settlements, the "inner development" or redevelopment must gain clear priority over the designation of new building land. This is also necessary in the interests of the citizens in order to maintain affordable living space as new developments trigger large financial consequences in the long term. Urban development funding must also be geared towards rural areas with increased structural difficulties.

The legislative has taken the great need for a manageable and rapidly implementable planning instrument for the redevelopment of communities into account with its changes to the Federal Building Code. This enables the activation and re-use of brownfield sites. Furthermore, village land consolidation in connection with village development is an important instrument to mobilise plots of land within the village.

The following services in particular can be rendered on behalf of the redevelopment of the hearts of villages and towns in association with all the instruments of regional development, urban planning development, village development and the reorganisation of land holdings:

- reviving the hearts of villages and towns by redesigning them in line with their functions,
- converting former agricultural buildings to other uses,
- pulling down buildings that can no longer be used, if necessary with a change in the use of the free areas of land created by this,
- land exchange, straightening borders and improving the minimum space between the border of the plot of land and the building for better building use or a change of use to residential or commercial use,
- connecting the village public thoroughfares to the supra-local transport routes, rear development of rural businesses,
- provision of land for communal purposes such as roads, pathways, open public spaces, new village or town exits and peripheral roads, the renaturation of streams, measures to desal land, flood protection facilities, wetland habitats.

The demerging of competing claims on land utilisation and the regulation of ownership structures create legal reassurance, activate private capital and thus promote investment activity in the public and private arenas.

With the use of rural development instruments, one can succeed in securing strong facilities and preserving villages and small towns as anchor points in order to safeguard the general economic interest in rural areas and create interfaces to all the other partners.

## **Land consolidation – active rural development through the reorganisation of land holdings**

The processes traditionally serve the integrated development of rural areas in accordance with the Land Consolidation Act. Besides improving production

and working conditions in the agriculture and forestry industries, they also serve to resolve conflicts of land use which arise through the various public and private claims with regard to the use of the land. They decisively assist with the implementation of the concerns regarding water protection, soil conservation and nature conservation and with the integration of public projects as far as property and environmental compatibility are concerned. From the catalogue of the types of procedure, those with which the rural development goals can be achieved efficiently, quickly and at a reasonable price must be chosen.

Amicable solutions must be striven for by means of the active involvement of all stakeholders in the rural area and intensive citizen participation. Unbiased behaviour and empathy with the specific interests of those affected, the landowners, tenants, local authorities, other planning authorities and other stakeholders made the land consolidation authorities a trustee of the landowners and an acknowledgedly neutral intermediary in the event of conflicting interests. Land consolidation procedures offer a wealth of possibilities regarding design and compensation with which, as experience shows, a high degree of consent can be achieved. The public authority aspect of land consolidation also facilitates legally sound solutions in situations where individual interests threaten to get out of hand to the detriment of the common good.

## **Land consolidation for large scale projects in the public interest – intelligent resolutions of conflicts of interest**

The prerequisite for the initiation of land consolidation for large scale projects in the public interest is the existence of a project for infrastructure or nature conservation that might be carried out by means of expropriation. This measure has to call for large plots of land in rural areas. The process presupposes an application from the expropriating authority. In the event of a measure relating to urban development in line with Chapter 190 of the Federal Building Code, the community has to put in an application.

Major traffic projects cut through parcels of land, roads, bodies of water and habitats and adversely affect the network of roads, bodies of water and biotopes. They cause diversions by reducing the chance to cut across land and also lead to plots of land no longer being accessible by means of formerly existing roads, leading to small, misshapen remaining plots of land that are uneconomic for farming purposes. Property owners and managers are affected in different ways. The loss of land is concentrated on individual operations and could lead to a threat to their existence.

Land consolidation for large scale projects in the public interest supports the implementation of infrastructure measures in various respects:

- The purchase of land can be extended across the entire consolidation area and beyond and can, therefore, be effected in a reasonably priced way.
- Landscape consumption owing to the reorganisation of the surrounding area is minimised, the damage done by fragmentation is reduced, any disadvantages for the land and soil are minimised.

- The land lost for the purposes of an infrastructure measure can, if it is not possible to buy additional land, be distributed across a larger circle of property owners.
- Environmental intervention compensation can be achieved over a larger, regional area by means of meaningful territorial and landscape associations as well as through eco-accounts and land pools.
- The writ of possession for the project management organisation can take place immediately after the incontestability of the official approval of the project management organisation's plan.

## **High priority continues to be given to the reorganisation of property rights according to the Agricultural Adjustment Act**

In the eastern states of Germany, considerable efforts continue to be necessary to regulate the ownership structures of agricultural and forestry-related plots of land as a result of the previously socialist property ownership. The land consolidation measures according to the Agricultural Adjustment Act create the prerequisites so that the operations can be managed on a secured property or tenancy basis and with an adjusted infrastructure that takes into account ecological needs in a way that is sustainable and in keeping with the location. They are also necessary to overcome one of the biggest investment obstacles: the separate ownership of land and building/facilities.

The process to determine and reorganise ownership structures are part of the mandatory tasks of the rural development authorities. In connection with the provisions of the Land Consolidation Act, a forward-looking restructuring of rural areas is achieved via the determination and reorganisation of the ownership structures.

## **Modern broadband provision**

Efficient broadband provision is of primary importance in rural areas and demands urgent action if rural areas are not to be left behind by developments.

- Internet-based services, both to use as well as to deliver services, are increasing rapidly. Faster access to the Internet is offers rural areas the chance to lessen the disadvantages caused by large spatial distances.
- Farmers increasingly require broadband Internet connection in order to support their operational processes and to make use of services.
- For companies and service providers in rural areas, fast access to the Internet is an indispensable local prerequisite.

The precondition for this is extensive broadband connections. Many rural communities lack fast Internet connections. The provision of broadband Internet access is a particularly significant goal for the future of rural areas and must, therefore, be supported by rural development.

## **Redesigning road networks**

The rapid structural change in the agriculture and forestry sector during the last few years and the altered land uses with the deployment of broader and heavier agricultural machinery have greatly changed the flows of traffic and transport needs and call for a network of roads that can be used all year round. New concepts for rural road networks can be derived from this:

- the thinning out of existing road networks to fit in with future needs and the desealing of road surfaces no longer required. Reduction of the amount of land used by decommissioning unneeded roads
- the creation of intercommunal road networks for the efficient use of rural infrastructure
- cooperations in the field of the management of compensatory areas with interventions in nature and the landscape, e.g. with the ecological enhancement of waysides
- the coordination or the demerging of different road uses for agriculture and tourism, e.g. with regard to cycle paths, bridle paths and footpaths
- Long-term safeguarding of road maintenance

When restructuring rural road networks, what is important is not just a width of road or a load-bearing capacity that takes into account possible future demands. Regional use and maintenance must also be ensured and conflict-free use must be facilitated.

## **Limiting land use in rural areas**

The instruments of rural development are particularly suitable for supporting redevelopment as well as cross-community development processes; they set in motion and promote inter-communal cooperations and minimise the amount of land used. When measures are being implemented, planning and moderation are supplemented by village development, the reorganisation of land holdings and the coordination of the land uses.

Thanks to integrated rural development concepts (ILEKs) and implementation support through regional management, individual measures that have, up to now, been isolated will be coordinated at intercommunal level. The planning-related enactment of the approaches is done, among other things, by means of instruments such as building planning, development concepts, brownfield sites, 'vacancy registers' and compensation measures, often also with the instrument of the reorganisation of land holdings in accordance with the Land Consolidation Act.

In order to support redevelopment, a combined use of the options of village development and the reorganisation of land holdings according to the Land Consolidation Act is particularly advantageous. This combination is an important instrument to mobilise plots of land in the hearts of small towns and villages if they cannot be achieved in any other way (e.g. simplified procedure in accordance with Section 13a of the Federal Building Code).



In all cases, the involvement and comprehensive advising of citizens must be organised at an early stage in the proceedings. By combining village development and the reorganisation of land holdings, the following village development processes in particular can be supported:

- Activating the heart of the village for functions and conversions to new uses in keeping with future needs.
- The demolition of building stock that cannot be used any more and using the land gained by this as open spaces including the creation of private and public green spaces in built-up areas and the adjoining fields.

## **Implementing ecological technical plans**

The responsible handling of natural resources such as water, soil and biodiversity is part of the elementary self-concept and basis of existence in rural areas. For many regions, the opportunities for the future lie in stronger valorisation of nature conservation and ecosystem services.

These guidelines are intended to contribute towards the resolution of competing land uses, the surmounting of existing conflicts between the measures that demand land and the better promotion of the potentials of development in a way which is compatible with nature. In conjunction with the process of the rural reorganisation of land holdings, this includes participation in the following measures:

- The creation of ecological technical plans and their implementation in rural development planning processes
- The calculation, accounting and ecological monitoring of areas important for nature protection
- The quality assurance of the development measures of rural development in ecological terms
- Ensuring that the structures newly created are properly maintained

## **IV.**

### **The reorganisation of land holdings and land-use management are of central importance**

#### **Up-do-date reorganisation of land holdings and forward-looking management of uses**

Development in rural areas is closely linked to the use of land because development generally lays claim to land or encroaches upon the current use of the land. That is why, in order for sustainable rural development to take place, the chance to carry out land reform (reorganisation of land holdings) and an intelligent management of the uses (land management) are of central importance. In many cases, it is only the reorganisation of land holdings and land management that create the prerequisites that enable planned development measures to be carried out at all.

Every call made on land owing to a change in the designated use of agricultural land demands forward-looking land management. Land management aims at the planning and ordering of sustainable land use which is as free of conflicts as possible and also supports the possible uses of areas of land, taking ecological and economic aspects into consideration. With its assistance, changes in the designated uses of agricultural land ("land use patterns") can be reduced and efficient use of land can be ensured.

Brownfield sites, infrastructures that have become superfluous and residential and farm buildings that are no longer required in villages can be converted to new uses. With regard to the inner development of villages, land use conflicts can be resolved and the use of the land for building purposes in a way that is suitable for the future can be controlled. In the land consolidation procedure, thanks to the reorganisation of land holdings, innovative solutions that save space and which also benefit industry or commerce in rural areas can be designed.

So-called marginal sites require the support of the reorganisation of land holdings in order to sustain extensive sustainable land management. This is what farmers and foresters and other investors need in order to be able to make business decisions.

Furthermore, one important outcome of the reorganisation of land holdings is the provision of up-to-date proof of pieces of real estate in the public books, especially in the land register and in the register of real estate, and thus the provision of legally compliant documentation of ownership structures.

## **Various means of assistance for communities and citizens through the core competences of rural development**

The reorganisation of land holdings and land management are among the core competencies of land development authorities and their partners. They can give effective help in various ways:

- In problem cases, they can offer the reorganisation of land holdings for planning and implementation from one source and "as a uniform and integrated whole", e.g. for major infrastructure projects, the recultivating of abandoned opencast mines, conversion plans and intercommunal projects.
- Land use conflicts can be resolved through the reconciliation of interests by means of the reorganisation of land holdings and land management e.g. between building, farming, infrastructure or landscape management,
- Land consolidation procedures can reorganise rights and duties relating to land, e.g. restrictions as to use, obligations to pay compensation, afforestation,
- The reorganisation of land holdings can suitably reorganise plots of land depending on their position, shape, size, development and relationship to neighbouring plots of land.
- The land consolidation process can reconstitute the free availability of private landed property, e.g. by uniting the ownership of land and buildings that have become separated over time.
- The reorganisation of land holdings and land management can comprehensively support the inner development of villages.
- In view of the increasing proportion of leased areas in agricultural enterprises, the farmed areas can be shaped appropriately by means of voluntary land readjustment measures.
- Taking into account landowners' interests without the use of means of coercion, areas for various concerns can be provided through the reorganisation of land holdings and land management.
- By means of a timely stocking up with land within the framework of land management, areas for investment measures as well as for compensatory measures relating to nature conservation can be held in reserve.
- The reorganisation of land holdings and land management can utilize the shrinkage processes in rural areas for strategies for the future.

## **V. Modern administrative action and an altered understanding of one's role in rural development**

Successful rural development calls for an altered understanding of one's role in the administrative experience:

### **Accentuating the local people and their abilities better**

A great deal of "untapped treasures" is slumbering in rural areas. The most important treasure is the creativity of local people and this must be exploited. The local creative forces and skills must be utilized. This means that the interest of fellow citizens that have up to now been less active in the local political discourse must be awoken and activated. Rural development should receive fresh stimuli from local citizens and must be "fun". Rural development is one way that creates identity and combines forces. It allows the citizens involved to look upon their village, community and region with pride.

The rural development instruments are designed in such a way that regional stakeholders can establish contact with each other and incorporate stimuli from outside into the region. Local networks are to be encouraged and made viable.

### **Citizen participation ensures acceptance and sustainability**

Planning methods that actively involve the citizens should replace planning done purely by experts. Use must be made of the knowledge, experience and ideas of the citizens regarding the circumstances in their homeland and the development they wish to have. Working groups, village and field workshops as well as discussions about guiding principles regarding the regional and village development should enable citizens to work on development goals hand in hand with the planning authorities. Comprehensible decision-making processes, drawn up according to the principle of countervailing influence, lead to high acceptance and boost self-responsibility. In terms of helping people to help themselves, this mobilises the strengths of the citizens in the regions and triggers diverse initiatives.

### **Jointly drafting and coordinating rural development concepts**

In order that integrated rural development concepts may also become reality, the partnership-like and dialogue-based interaction of all pivotal stakeholders is required. Only where it is possible to awaken the initiative of the communities and citizens, to coordinate existing community plans and the plans of experts with each other as well as to combine the resources as far as finance and personnel are concerned can rural development be successfully promoted.

## **Moderating rural development**

The rural development of a region should always be guided by a moderator, whose task is to articulate the objectives of the stakeholders, to moderate and work, in a coordinating way, towards a bundle of measures that could find consensus, is implementation-oriented and secured as far as financing is concerned. The issue of who should exercise the role of moderator and in what phase should be decided according to the situation at hand, especially according to the development goals to be achieved. The role of moderator can, if the stakeholders see it as appropriate, be exercised by a person who holds a political mandate, by a representative of a state specialist administration or also, in a contractual relationship, by a third party. Experience has shown that it can be particularly effective to entrust the office responsible for rural development with this function.

## **Preparation is the key to efficient rural development**

The key to the target-oriented use of the instruments is comprehensive preparation. For this purpose, all stakeholders must be gathered around a table in order to be able to discuss all the concerns relating to the enactment of the process at the same time and in good time. Strict orientation towards targets as early as in the preliminary phase enables the clear and timely establishment of the procedures. Everyone involved has to understand that any late extension of the goals will inevitably prolong the procedure.

## **The transfer of knowledge and expertise to the regions**

Successful rural development calls for the highest amount of professionalism, which is why the transfer of knowledge to the regions must be promoted. The citizens and other stakeholders have to be able to get eligibly involved in the development process. This is accomplished, for example, by the Academies for Rural Areas (Akademien Ländlicher Raum), Schools of Village Renewal and Rural Development (Schulen der Dorferneuerung und Landentwicklung), seminar and forum events but also Internet platforms and personal talks. One important factor of knowledge transfer is a highly qualified rural development authority, which is characterised by expertise, the ability to inspire enthusiasm, the power of persuasiveness, communication and mediating skills as well as administrative experience and an appropriate capacity to get things done.

## **Cooperating and doing without**

Demographic change and the change in values force people in the villages to cooperate with each other, to cooperate within larger areas of the community and far beyond that. In this context, rural development means dividing up infrastructures and doing without. Doing without is to be managed and rewarded by means of new forms of support. In doing so, churches, communities and other social agencies must be involved in such a way that the still often duplicate social structure services and infrastructure services are stabilised in a way that means they can still offer sustainable basic services. Rural develop-

ment must also help to develop new structures of thinking and working in villages. In order to maintain and convert social structures and infrastructures in the villages, new ideas must be developed and put to the test; financial support models must be created with EU, government or state funds; new forms of moderation be created; and motivated, external and internal "movers and shakers" deployed.

## **Making better use of scarce financial resources, encouraging investment**

When it comes to rural development measures, several space-relevant projects must be combined. This boosts the effect of the individual measures and leads to financial advantages for all involved. Uniting financial means from various sources further increases the implementation opportunities for the individual projects.

The most important financial basis of rural development is the "Joint Task to Improve Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection" (operated jointly by the Federal and Länder governments). In Germany, it is indispensable for rural development also in the future and should continue to remain linked with the support of rural areas through the EU. At the same time, one must also combine complementary financial sources and, with regard to the financing of rural development, increasingly mobilise the funds of third parties.

## **Entering into partnerships**

In order to stabilise rural areas experiencing processes of shrinkage, diverse partnerships such as public-private partnerships are required. What is meant by this are new kinds of approaches to fulfil communal tasks with the involvement of the private economy. The communities and companies of private enterprise will thereby primarily cooperate with regard to the financing but also as regards to the implementation of projects.

The aim is to facilitate investments in rural areas more and more by means of public-private partnerships even when it comes to measures of rural development. For this purpose, models should be tried out between local authorities, regional stakeholders, artisans or craftspeople, local banks and other conceivable partners (contracting models) in order to carry out projects of general economic interest by means of public-private partnerships.

In this connection, partners, such as the rural housing companies, should be included which carry out on behalf of the local authorities, for example, a stocking up of land, land purchase, the setting up of eco-accounts and eco-pools and the exercise of the right of first refusal.



## Decisive benefits for all:

### **Designing the future in rural areas together – by means of rural development!**

- Rural development means improving the living and working conditions for the people in rural areas.
- Rural development demands joint and transparent planning, concerted action, the bundling of financial resources, and the swift implementation of the requisite measures.
- Rural development means saving time and money by means of modern governance.
- Rural development is effective: it achieves acceptance and sustainability through the active participation of the citizens.
- Rural development calls for the use of the proven instruments of ILEK, ILE-regional management, LEADER, the reorganisation of land holdings, village development, the creation of up-to-date infrastructures, and the promotion of investments in a way that is adapted to needs and appropriate.

## Appendix

Points of contact of the federal and state governments for sustainable rural development

### Federal Government

Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz  
Referat 416 - Entwicklung ländlicher Räume  
Wilhelmstr. 54  
10117 Berlin  
Tel.: 030-18529 - 0  
Fax: - 4262  
E-mail: [poststelle@bmelv.bund.de](mailto:poststelle@bmelv.bund.de)

### Bavaria

Bay. Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten  
Abteilung E – ländlicher Raum und nachwachsende Rohstoffe, Ländliche Entwicklung  
Ludwigstraße 2  
80539 Munich  
Tel.: 089-21 82 – 0  
Fax: - 2709  
E-mail: [poststelle@stmelf.bayern.de](mailto:poststelle@stmelf.bayern.de)

### Brandenburg

Ministerium für Infrastruktur und Landwirtschaft des Landes Brandenburg  
Referat 36 – Ländliche Entwicklung  
Henning-von-Tresckow-Straße 2-8  
14467 Potsdam  
Tel.: 0331-866 – 0  
Fax: - 8368  
E-mail: [poststelle@mil.brandenburg.de](mailto:poststelle@mil.brandenburg.de)

### Hamburg

Behörde für Wirtschaft, Verkehr und Innovation  
Amt Strukturpolitik, Arbeitsmarkt, Agrarwirtschaft  
Referat 2 – Planung und Landentwicklung  
Alter Steinweg 4  
20459 Hamburg  
E-mail: [poststelle@bwa.hamburg.de](mailto:poststelle@bwa.hamburg.de)

### Baden-Württemberg

Ministerium für Ländlichen Raum und Verbraucherschutz  
Referat 46 - Landentwicklung  
Kernerplatz 10  
70182 Stuttgart  
Tel.: 0711-126 – 0  
Fax: - 2905  
E-mail: [poststelle@mlr.bwl.de](mailto:poststelle@mlr.bwl.de)

### Berlin

Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz  
Oranienstr. 106  
10969 Berlin  
Tel.: 030-9025 – 1  
Fax: – 2501  
The tasks are administered by Brandenburg (see address there)

### Bremen

Senator für Wirtschaft u.Häfen  
Bereich Wirtschaft  
z. Hd. Frau Honemann  
Zweite Schlachtpforte 3  
28195 Bremen  
Tel. : 0421-361 – 8502  
Fax: – 8283  
E-mail : [office@wuh.bremen.de](mailto:office@wuh.bremen.de)

### Hessen

Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung  
Abt. I – Landesplanung, Regionalentwicklung, Bodenmanagement  
Kaiser-Friedrich-Ring 75  
65185 Wiesbaden  
Tel.: 0611-815 – 0  
Fax: - 2225  
E-mail: [poststelle@hmvwl.hessen.de](mailto:poststelle@hmvwl.hessen.de)

### **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**

Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz  
Referat 340 – Landentwicklung, Flurneueordnung, Dorferneuerung, LEADER  
Paulshöher Weg 1  
19069 Schwerin  
Tel.: 0385-588 – 0  
Fax: - 6024/6025  
E-Mail: [poststelle@lm.mvnet.de](mailto:poststelle@lm.mvnet.de)

### **North Rhine-Westphalia**

Ministerium f. Klimaschutz, Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Natur- und Verbraucherschutz  
Referat II – 6 – integrierte ländliche Entwicklung  
Schwannstraße 3  
40476 Düsseldorf  
Tel.: 0211-4566 – 0  
Fax: - 388  
E-mail: [poststelle@mkulnv.nrw.de](mailto:poststelle@mkulnv.nrw.de)

### **Saarland**

Ministerium für Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft  
Abt. F – Landwirtschaft, Entwicklung ländlicher Raum  
Franz-Josef-Röder-Str. 17  
66119 Saarbrücken  
Tel.: 0681-501 – 00  
Fax: - 4521  
E-mail: [poststelle@wirtschaft.saarland.de](mailto:poststelle@wirtschaft.saarland.de)

### **Saxony-Anhalt**

Ministerium für  
Landwirtschaft und Umwelt  
Referat 53 – Flurneueordnung, ländlicher Wegebau  
Olvenstedter Straße 4-5  
39108 Magdeburg  
Tel.: 0391-567 - 01  
Fax: - 17 27  
E-mail: [poststelle@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de](mailto:poststelle@mlu.sachsen-anhalt.de)

### **Lower Saxony**

Ministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft, Verbraucherschutz und Landesentwicklung  
Referat 306 – Landentwicklung und ländliche Bodenordnung  
Calenberger Straße 2  
30169 Hanover  
Tel.: 0511-120 – 0  
Fax: - 2385  
E-mail: [poststelle@ml.niedersachsen.de](mailto:poststelle@ml.niedersachsen.de)

### **Rhineland-Palatinate**

Ministerium f. Umwelt, Landwirtschaft, Ernährung, Weinbau und Forsten Rheinland-Pfalz  
Referat 1084 – ländliche Entwicklung, Bodenordnung, Flurbereinigungsverwaltung  
Emmeranstraße 39  
55116 Mainz  
Tel. : 06131-16 – 0  
Fax : - 2644/-2447  
E-mail: [poststelle@mulewf.rlp.de](mailto:poststelle@mulewf.rlp.de)

### **Saxony**

Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Landwirtschaft  
Referat 24 – ländliche Entwicklung  
Archivstraße 1  
01097 Dresden  
Tel.: 0351-564 – 0  
Fax: - 2209  
E-mail: [poststelle@smul.sachsen.de](mailto:poststelle@smul.sachsen.de)

### **Schleswig-Holstein**

Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und ländliche Räume  
Abt. 2 - Landwirtschaft, Fischerei und ländliche Räume  
Mercatorstraße 3  
24106 Kiel  
Tel.: 0431-988 – 0  
Fax : - 5172  
E-mail: [poststelle@mlur.landsh.de](mailto:poststelle@mlur.landsh.de)

**Thuringia**

Thür. Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Forsten, Umwelt und Naturschutz

Abt. 2 – ländlicher Raum, Forsten

Hallesche Straße 16

99085 Erfurt

Tel.: 0361-3799 – 0

Fax: - 702

E-mail: [poststelle@tmlfun.thueringen.de](mailto:poststelle@tmlfun.thueringen.de)

**Editor:**

Bund – Länder – Arbeitsgemeinschaft Nachhaltige Landentwicklung  
c/o  
Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und  
Verbraucherschutz Mecklenburg - Vorpommern Referat 340  
Paulshöher Weg 1  
19069 Schwerin

**Text:**

Bund – Länder – Arbeitsgemeinschaft Nachhaltige Landentwicklung  
Arbeitskreis I – Grundsatzangelegenheiten  
Prof. Axel Lorig  
Ministerium f. Umwelt, Landwirtschaft,  
Ernährung, Weinbau und Forsten Rheinland-Pfalz  
Referat 1084 –  
Emmeranstraße 39  
55116 Mainz

**Cover photos/photos on back cover:**

Volker Kleinfeld  
Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and  
Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

**Cover design:**

Michael Knoblich  
Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and  
Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

**Printed by:**

Druckerei Buck GmbH, Ludwigslust