



Forum for Sustainable Agricultural Policies 2013

Project

Duration

Aug 2008 - Apr 2011

Rural areas face a number of new challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and the increasing demand for biomass. In this project, a series of conferences with different themes and a wide range of actors will investigate new strategies for innovation in rural areas, compliant with environmentally friendly economic activities.

In December 2005, the European Council adopted the [2007-2013 Financial Perspective](#). Thereby the council did not only agree on the financial framework for the European Union (EU) during this period, but also decided that the EU budget should be comprehensively reviewed during 2008-2009.

Parallel to the review of the EU budget, the 2008 [health check of the agricultural policy](#) has been controversially discussed. During the health check, new challenges and opportunities for the future agricultural policy have been formulated, namely climate change, water management, the protection of biodiversity and bioenergy production. Against this background, the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Agency for Nature conservation have seen the need to link future support payments more closely to innovation in rural areas and thus to promote environment-friendly economic activities in order to ensure an improved congruency between ecological and economic objectives. The concept of [“ecological industry policy”](#) plays a core role to achieve this aim.

The following overall guiding principles for a sustainable agriculture can be formulated:

- Linking agricultural funding schemes to high environmental standards
- Moving away from broad agricultural subsidies towards targeted promotion of ecological and social benefits
- Integrated view of rural areas and their responsibility towards the protection of nature and the environment
- Promotion of (technical) innovation in terms of resource-friendly land management practices and the creation of skilled jobs.

The design of these guiding principles requires the interest and the accord of the main rural area stakeholders. Through this series of conferences, relevant stakeholders will be actively included in the discussion.

Ecologic Institute is supporting the BMU and BfN with scientific advice including the compilation of background materials, and the organisation of the conferences.

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