

GERMANY

Improve the quality of life in rural areas

Location
Erfurt

Programming period
2007 – 2013

Axis / Priority
Axis 3 - quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

Measure
M323 - Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage

Funding (EUR)
Total budget 1 095 896
EAFRD 109 823
National/Regional 329 469
Other 656 604

Project duration
2009 – 2013

Project promoter
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Testing the transferability of landscape management to other Natura 2000 sites.

Summary

The aim of the project was to identify technical, financial and locally appropriate ways to recover wood fuel through landscape maintenance in the most ecologically and economically advantageous manner. For this purpose, a total of 41 pilot areas were harvested in representatively selected habitats in Thuringia and Brandenburg.



In the districts of Teltow-Fläming and Uckermark, wood has been recovered by landscape maintenance. On about 300 ha of non-agricultural land, the wood was harvested from a variety of habitats including sandy dry grasslands, hedge complexes, sand heaths and inland dunes, generating energy for the region. This is to protect the habitat against succession of shrubs and preserve a rich variety of flora and fauna.

Results

The project revealed that active recycling of wood contributes to a significant reduction in costs for maintenance. On average, the costs could be reduced by 35%, in some areas by up to 75%, in a few areas up to 90%.

Costs for energy uses of woody plants and shrubs are 25% lower compared to previous use (burning of wood on the surface).

The climate effect is very positive, even with extensive use of technology (greenhouse gas balance: the process chains consumed an average of 4% of the substituted amount of CO₂; highly mechanised process consumed a maximum of 8% of the substituted amount of CO₂);

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Due to the difficulties of coordinating the efforts of a number of land owners and the necessary changes in use, no energy entrepreneur will tap the potential of the wood on shrub areas as an energy source.
- ❑ Adjustments of funding are necessary, e.g. under the German law for renewable energies (EEG) and funding scheme for landscape management. For instance, in the case of the latter the necessity of grazing the surfaces immediately after initial clearing is not encouraged under currently available funding schemes, including the EAFRD 2014-2020, since the surfaces are not classified as agricultural land.