



POLICY BRIEF

How to **IMPROVE LANDSCAPE GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY** at local and regional level

PB#4 in short: Landscape governance takes a specific geographical area or place as a starting point and offers the opportunity to consider different socio-economic and environmental global and locally specific issues and their manifestation in that particular area/place **during the decision-making process.**

Context and challenge

Landscapes cannot be seen as an accidental result of the use of territory and its resources, but rather as an important factor in making decisions on territorial processes, as well as a vital element in the quality of life and well-being of communities in the framework of fair and sustainable development.

Landscape governance relies on networking as the basis upon which spatial decisions can be jointly made by different actors, all firmly brought together by one goal: a long-

term sustainable landscape. True landscape governance requires responsible, aware and informed citizens, government officers, business leaders and entrepreneurs who are not only willing to take on responsibility, but also be legally entitled to participate in decision-making. Therefore, collaboration, co-creation and co-ownership are not only fundamental for landscape governance, but also to effective access to information; such pre-requisites are critical in supporting good governance through transparent and accountable decisions.

PROGRESS in practice – Tools by examples

The [ESM Webtool](#) is a novel decision-support tool for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and planning processes at different territorial scales in Ireland. It includes an instrument that enables the user to generate context-specific environmental sensitivity maps, highlighting areas that will need careful consideration during plan-making. They provide early warning of potential land-use conflicts to inform the scoping, alternatives and impact assessment stages of SEA. The ESM Webtool fosters consistency and transparency in landscape governance, as everyone can access and examine environmental and socio-economic criteria and information behind assessments and decisions. It helps to raise environmental awareness and is an educational tool, both at professional and scholar levels.

GOOD PRACTICE 1: Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool to Support Strategic Environmental Assessment and Plan-making, Ireland



GOOD PRACTICE 2: : LIFE VIVA GRASS – Integrated Planning Tool to ensure viability of grasslands, Baltic countries (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania)

[VIVAGRASS](#) tool aims to prevent the loss of grasslands of high nature value and increase the effectiveness of semi-natural grassland management. It applies an ecosystem services approach to support decision-making and land use planning at farm level. VIVAGRASS strengthens linkages between social, economic and environmental aspects in rural development policies and grassland management. It can be used for the assessment of the current situation, identification of highly valuable or sensitive areas from an ecological perspective and development of suitable planning solutions.



PROGRESS “How to” recommendations on landscape governance for sustainability

- 1 Support landscape governance decisions with data and knowledge on environmental assets and on the functioning of ecosystem services. Map and assess all landscapes in reference to their potential to supply ecosystem services.
- 2 Promote information exchange and establish ready and user-friendly access to data to anyone having a say in its planning and management, via platforms such as the ESM webtool.
- 3 Establish collaboration and cooperation between all the sectors involved in landscape governance. Engage stakeholders in participatory processes to integrate local knowledge to define visions, objectives and criteria for prioritisation of landscape management measures.
- 4 Multi-functionality of landscapes can be useful to increment the value of landscape governance.
- 5 Develop pilot case studies applying the ecosystem services approach at different planning levels and contexts.
- 6 Methodologies like [Shared Agendas for Change](#) or [Theory of Change](#), based on participative governance and stakeholder collective action, allow to reach a common understanding of systemic challenges in the landscape, co-design, test and disseminate new solutions through multistakeholder transformative shared agendas and scale up successful tested solutions.



Visit [PROGRESS website](#) for further information and other good practices (Handbook 4, GP descriptions, GP videos, presentations, and recordings of thematic workshops).

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What is Interreg PROGRESS?

Interreg Europe PROGRESS - PROMoting the Governance of Regional Ecosystem Services aims to initiate a process of policy change towards the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of nature's capacity to deliver the goods and services that we all need.

Project partners: National Association of Italian Municipalities Tuscany (ANCI Toscana), Coordinator, Italy; CREAM (Ecology Research and Forestry Applications Centre), Catalonia-Spain; Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly, Ireland; Riga Technical University, Latvia; Tolna County Development Agency, Hungary; University of Craiova, Romania.