Innovation Groups
for Sustainable Land Management
Innovation Groups as pioneers

By 2019, a total of nine Innovation Groups will have developed long-term, practicable solutions for Sustainable Land Management. These Innovation Groups focus on integrated land use, shaping the energy transition at the local level, and concepts of cultural landscape management. The Innovation Groups are in the process of developing sustainable, applicable solutions for regions facing particular challenges in the light of climate change and structural economic changes.
The idea behind Innovation Groups
The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is providing funding to nine Innovation Groups. By 2019, these Innovation Groups will have developed future-oriented, practicable solutions for using the resource land, focusing on both implementation-oriented research and innovation processes.

From idea to practice
The “Innovation Groups for Sustainable Land Management” funding programme enables the BMBF to forge ahead with new ways to put innovations in sustainability into practical use: teams of scientists and practitioners work together as equals from the outset, leveraging each other’s skills to become more qualified in innovation research and innovation management. Research institutions, municipalities, public utilities and regional planners, as well as farmers, energy producers, energy agencies and engineering companies are represented in these teams of scientists and practitioners.

Generating momentum for real-world practice
Feasibility and transferability are crucial aspects of the concepts developed. Throughout the projects, Innovation Groups consider under which conditions their research results can be implemented; this ensures that their results have an impact in the real world. Innovation concepts are designed to foster the implementation of research results and processes – even after the end of the funding period.
City needs country needs city
Five Innovation Groups focus on the relationships between urban and rural residents in order to develop solutions for land use and landscape management. In dialogue with a variety of user groups, teams of scientists and practitioners seek to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas by fostering mutual appreciation and by creating value throughout the region. The groups debate and reflect on cultural landscape as well as on the delivery of public services.

Renewable energy needs space
The other four Innovation Groups concentrate on developing integrated approaches to the energy transition at the regional level, which seek to bring together energy production, energy efficiency and new decentralised grid structures. By ensuring that local citizens participate in these research projects from an early stage, the land use solutions are expected to be widely accepted and environmentally responsible. This means developing appropriate models for cooperation and operation.

The scientific coordinating project: more than just communication and networking
The research approaches taken by the nine Innovation Groups are as diverse as the innovative ideas for sustainable land management themselves. The scientific coordinating project works to weave these ideas together. Besides connecting people and fostering communication, it also derives statements for politics and society as a whole. It also offers innovation management coaching to the Innovation Groups and helps them to develop strategies for sustainable land management.

The scientific coordinating project is an alliance between inter 3 Institute for Resource Management and the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF).
Expectations of practitioners

“Participation in the Innovation Group will give us the chance to learn in an interdisciplinary way and to actively become involved in designing potential solutions for competing land uses.”

Thomas Schmid, Hofgemeinschaft Heggelbach

“We expect learning effects in participatory and technical aspects in order to develop skills to design the local energy transition.”

Michael Schäfer, District of Ahrweiler, Structural Development Department

“We see the transdisciplinary approach as an opportunity to link stakeholders that sometimes operate separately on a small scale. Innovation potential could emerge out of new communication and cooperation structures and of different perspectives on the value and functions of the cultural landscape.”

Torsten Wilke, City of Leipzig, Office for Urban Green and Water Courses

“Land is life and habitat, but also home. This makes the exploration of sustainable land management complex and multifaceted, but also controversial and necessary.”

Anne Reinsberg, Öko-BeratungsGesellschaft mbH

“We see the Innovation Group as a developer and transmitter of new findings in the field of agriculture.”

Gottfried Richter, Director of the Amt Kleine Elster (Niederlausitz)
The Innovation Groups

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[www.agrophotovoltaik.de](http://www.agrophotovoltaik.de)

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*Dr. André Schaffrin, EA European Academy of Technology and Innovation Assessment GmbH, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler*  
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Jens Schneider, Research Institute for Water and Waste Management at RWTH Aachen (FiW) e. V.
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